

A STUDY OF THE EXTENT TO WHICH DISPLACEMENT  
IS A SIGNIFICANT THEME IN THE USE OF THE OLD  
TESTAMENT IN MATTHEW'S INFANCY NARRATIVE

by

MATTHEW JOHN NEVILLE

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Department of Theology and Religion  
School of Philosophy, Theology and Religion  
College of Arts and Law  
University of Birmingham  
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## **ABSTRACT**

Matthew's Gospel was written in a historical context of displacement, the community from which this text emerged likely experienced displacement as a result of the Jewish Roman War. The Infancy narrative (Matt 1-2) presents a number of references to forced displacement. These two chapters also make extensive use of the OT. This thesis seeks to bring together a discussion of the use of the OT in Matthew's Infancy narrative and a discussion of the significance of the theme of displacement. The thesis will discuss two questions: To what extent is displacement a significant theme in Matthew's infancy narrative, and where the theme of displacement can be established, how is the OT used within the text to present and expound on the theme?

This study concludes that displacement is a theme which the Matthean author seeks to evoke. Matthew's text supports the argument that as a displaced people the Matthean community sought to understand their situation by reflecting upon themes of displacements in the OT.

## **DEDICATION**

For all those who are displaced  
and looking for meaning.

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# **ABBREVIATIONS**

## **General Abbreviations**

OT = Old Testament  
NT = New Testament  
LXX = Septuagint  
MT = Masoretic Text

## **Biblical Books**

Gen = Genesis  
Exod = Exodus  
Num = Numbers  
Deut = Deuteronomy  
Josh = Joshua  
Judg = Judges  
Ruth = Ruth  
1Sam = 1 Samuel  
2Sam = 2 Samuel  
1Kgs = 1 Kings  
2Kgs = 2 Kings  
1Chr = 1 Chronicles  
Neh = Nehemiah  
Job = Job  
Ps = Psalms  
Isa = Isaiah  
Jer = Jeremiah  
Ezek = Ezekiel  
Dan = Daniel  
Hos = Hosea  
Joel = Joel  
Amos = Amos  
Jonah = Jonah  
Mic = Micah  
Tob = Tobit  
Jdt = Judith  
Bar = Baruch  
2 Macc = 2 Maccabees  
Matt = Matthew  
Mark = Mark  
John = John  
Acts = Acts  
Gal = Galatians

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

i. **My Question**

In this study I will be researching how Matthew's Infancy Narrative references the Old Testament (OT) theme of displacement. I will discuss how Matthew's text uses characters and episodes in the OT text to highlight this theme. I will begin by arguing as to why the theme of displacement may have been relevant to Matthew's community from the perspective of their political and social context. I will then discuss the theme of displacement with reference to the text attempting to judge whether or not it is actually a significant theme in the Infancy narrative. I will ask the following question:

1. To what extent is displacement a significant theme in Matthew's infancy narrative.
2. Where the theme of displacement can be established, how is the OT used within the text to present and expound on the theme?

My contention is that the theme of displacement is a significant theme for Matthew's Infancy narrative, and that this theme runs through the text as an ongoing concern. In some places, such as the journey to Egypt or the mention of the Babylonian exile in the genealogy, the theme is clear in the text; in other places, such as the allusions to the creation, the theme is not a major theme. I will also propose that for some details the theme of displacement may not be the primary reason for making a specific OT reference but that nevertheless the theme of displacement is present as a significant background to the OT context. For example this is the case with the references to Abraham and David, displacement is part of their OT story and so is part of the OT context which Matthew's text is evoking but it is unlikely to be the primary reason for referencing these characters. In this study I will critically discuss and assess the extent to which my proposal as to the significance of displacement is valid, and the ways in which it is not valid.



## ii. Preliminary Concerns

Before introducing my argument, I will begin by making some brief comment on my use of terms in this study. The term displacement is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as “The enforced departure of people from their homes, typically because of war, persecution, or natural disaster” (Oxford Online Dictionary<sup>1</sup>); for the purposes of this study this might be the movement of a significant individual such as Abraham, or it may be the movement of a large group such as the exodus. At times I will use the term to apply to both forced and voluntary movement however, following the dictionary definition above, most often in this study the term will apply to forced movement as a result of some threat, although it is important to note that at times the distinction between forced and voluntary movement is not always clear.

I am aware that the term ‘Old Testament’ is not an ideal term to use in this context, the distinction of old and new suggests the implication that Christianity is new in contrast to Judaism being old, no such implication is intended in this work other than the chronological use of old and new as synonyms for earlier and later. I use the term OT because it is commonly understood and because other possible terms have problems. Firstly, at the time Matthew writes there was no established canon of Jewish sacred literature the situation was in flux, so defining which writings would have been considered part of Jewish scripture at that time was (and is) up for debate (VanderKam, 2002, p.91-92). The term ‘Hebrew Bible’ is not ideal because Matthew refers to Greek versions (Brown, 1993, pp.221-223<sup>2</sup>), in all likelihood a number of Greek version which precludes using the term ‘LXX’. Using the term ‘Jewish Bible’ would also not be ideal because there are a range of different versions and as already mentioned much debate about what was included and what was not. Concerning the period after the Jewish-Roman War of 66-70<sup>CE</sup> VanderKam writes: “while there were authoritative writings, and these were at times gathered into

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<sup>1</sup> <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/displacement>

<sup>2</sup> At this reference Brown discusses different Greek versions of Jer 31:15.

recognizable groupings (e.g., Law, Prophets, Others), the category of revealed literature was not considered a closed and fixed one” (VanderKam, 2002, p.92). I will proceed aware that Old Testament is an unhelpful term in some regards, I am using it as a conventional term with the widest possible definition to refer to Jewish literature which was considered sacred by Jews at the time of Matthew’s community.

Throughout this work I will refer to Matthew’s text rather than to an author named Matthew. I will use phrases like “Matthew’s text presents Jesus....”, this is a short-hand; I am aware that every text has an author. It is not the purpose of this study to engage in a detailed study of specifically who the author was, there are difficulties in assessing who actually wrote the text and whether this person may not have been named Matthew. I am also aware that the gospel is the work of a community, and even if it was written by a single author it very likely contains the thoughts and ideas of a whole community.

In this first chapter I will discuss the date, location and provenance of Matthew’s Gospel, discussing briefly the political and religious context. It is my contention in this study that the theme of displacement is significant for Matthew. I will give an overview of the current scholarship on this subject then set out some open questions concerning how this theme of displacement might feature in the Infancy narrative.

In this study I will discuss the ways in which Matthew’s text uses the OT in its infancy narrative. Reference will be made to the use of the OT more widely in the gospel but only where it gives value to this study of the Infancy narrative. I will argue that Matthew’s text uses the OT in three principle ways:

- 1) By using citations from the OT
- 2) By associating Jesus with significant named figures or events from Jewish history,
- 3) By making allusions to significant narratives or unnamed figures in Jewish history.

In chapter two I will discuss the use of the OT in Matthew's text across these three different ways and outline a methodology both for how Matthew's text uses the OT, and for how this study will identify and assess potential OT references.

Through Chapters three and four I will test these questions against the text, discussing Matthew's genealogy (1:1-17) in chapter three, and the narrative (1:18-2:23) in chapter four. In chapter five I will offer some conclusions.

### iii. **Key sources for this study**

Space does not permit me to discuss every aspect of this text, but a wider knowledge of the themes of the infancy narrative has been an important. I have relied on the commentaries of Brown (1977/1993), France (1985), Davies & Allison (1988), Luz (1989), Gundry (1994) and Nolland (2005); I have drawn on these studies in my discussion. Of particular note is *The Birth of the Messiah* by Brown. His detailed study of Matthew's infancy narrative will be my starting point for this study. In my reliance on Brown as an academic source I am following many later scholars, it is rare to find an article on Matthew's infancy narrative which does not cite Brown. Another important work has been *Was The Birth of Jesus According to Scripture* by Steve Moyise, Moyise offers a detailed discussion of several elements in the infancy narrative; I have drawn on his study particularly when discussing the formula citations. Also important has been *The New Moses* by Allison (1993). I am reliant on Allison for his methodology for identifying and confirming the validity of OT allusions. Also of importance in defining Matthew's use of the OT has been the work of Beale (2012 & 2014) which discusses the question of whether Matthew's OT references are used consistently with their OT context or not; I will be following Beale's argument that context is significant. Central to my argument that the theme of displacement is significant for Matthew's text has been the work of Wright (1992), Carter (2000, 2000 & 2001), Eloff (2004) and Myles (2013).

**iv. The Theme of Displacement in Matthew's Infancy Narrative**

As already stated above in my preliminary concerns it is my contention in this study that the theme of displacement is significant for Matthew's text. In this section I will give an overview of my reasons for such a position, through chapters three to five I will assess the validity of my position against the text. My argument is not that the theme of displacement is the only concern for Matthew's text, nor even that the text pursues this theme above all others. I wish to assess whether associating Jesus with the theme of displacement is a significant concern in Matthew's infancy narrative. In order to make this assessment I will discuss how Matthew's text references OT stories of displacement such as the Babylonian Exile, the Exodus, the story of Joseph and the characters of Abraham and David.

I will be following the position argued by a number of scholars, that Matthew's text is presenting the contemporary historical moment as being a time of displacement comparable with previous times of displacement found in the OT (Piotrowski, 2015, pp.189-203; Eloff, 2004, pp.76-85; Wright, 1992, pp.268-272). Below I will outline my reasons for proposing that Matthew's community were living in a context of physical displacement in a diaspora city. In this diaspora context the Matthean community looked back into their history and sacred tradition for parallel experiences. I will introduce my starting place by discussing first the political and social context then the religious context particularly the relationship of the Matthean community to other Jewish groups.

**v. Political and Social arguments for the significance of the theme of displacement.**

This study of the theme of displacement in Matthew's infancy narrative will be principally focussed on the text however before turning to the text I will briefly survey the context of Matthew's community discussing how the political and social context might have led this community to be concerned with the theme of displacement.

There is a general consensus that Matthew's Gospel was written after the end of the Jewish-Roman War in 70<sup>CE</sup>, and before 100<sup>CE</sup>. This is the position held by most scholars of Matthew (Brown & Meier, 1983, pp.15-18; Brown, 1993, p.46; Gundry, 1994, p.599; Saldarini, 1994, p.1-2; Riches, 1996, p.10; Sim, 1998, pp.31-40). In this study I will proceed with the assumption that Matthew's Gospel was written no later than 100<sup>CE</sup> and no earlier than 70<sup>CE</sup>. Most likely the gospel was written in the period 75-90 <sup>CE</sup>.

The Gospel is written in Greek, suggesting that it emerged from a community which was at least bilingual if not primarily Greek speaking (Sim, 1998, p.40). The most popular view has been that Matthew was written in Antioch or in the city's surrounding rural hinterland (Brown & Meier, 1983, p.22-27; Luz, 1995, p.18; Riches, 1996, p.52; Sim, 1998, p.10). The association of Matthew's gospel with Antioch is based on the mention of the Gospel in the writings of Ignatius of Antioch (Gundry, 1994, pp.609), however this does not offer conclusive proof that the gospel was written in Antioch. Placing Matthew in Antioch does fit with several of the key themes of Matthew's gospel; Antioch was a large and diverse city, the city had both a significant Jewish diaspora community and a gentile majority (Brown & Meier, 1983, p.23; Sim, 1998, p.6); in this context it would be logical that Matthew's gospel would deal with questions of how followers of Jesus should relate to both Jews and Gentiles. Antioch is a good suggestion as a possible location but it is impossible to assert a location with any certainty as other diaspora cities are also a possibility.

The location of Matthew's community in a diaspora city can be argued for on the basis of the realities of the Jewish-Roman war 66-70<sup>CE</sup>; throughout the war and during the first years after its end, an unknown number of Jews migrated out of Judea and Galilee into the surrounding regions. Galilee was pacified by Vespasian's forces between the spring of 67<sup>CE</sup> and spring of 68<sup>CE</sup> (Neusner, 1975, p.143). Neusner suggests that the Christian Jewish community in Jerusalem may have fled in 68<sup>CE</sup> when the moderate revolutionary rulers were overthrown by the Zealot coalition (Neusner, 1975, p.144). It would make logical sense to assume that Matthew's community, and

the wider Jewish community, could have been at least partly made up of these refugees of war either from Judea or Galilee.

Mark is Matthew's principal source, France notes that 45% of Matthew's text is found in similar form in Mark, he argues at length that Mark is earlier (France, 1985, pp.34-35). Hooker and Kebler both date Mark to around 70<sup>CE</sup> but acknowledge that it is impossible to date Mark accurately, the date could be earlier or later (Kebler, 1979, pp.13-14; Hooker, 1991, p.8). Different theories exist for the location of the Markan community. Hooker comments that Clement of Alexandria locates Mark in Rome and Chrysostom locates Mark in Egypt, both of which she dismisses as unlikely; Hooker also notes that others have suggested Antioch and Galilee as possibilities, however she concludes that it is not possible to narrow down Mark's location to anything more specific than "somewhere in the Roman empire" (Hooker, 1991, pp7-8). Other scholars have attempted to be more concrete, Kee, Kebler and Myers have all made a case for Galilee arguing that details within the narrative indicate that Mark was written in rural Galilee during the war (Kee, 1977, p.176; Kebler, 1979, p.13; Myers, 1988, p.40-42). If this theory is followed then it is easy to imagine that a group of Galilean refugees might have taken a copy of Mark's gospel with them to a diaspora city where it was shared with indigenous diaspora Jews and so became the key source for Matthew's Gospel a generation later. Equally the same argument would stand if Mark's community was of Judean origin, many possible locations for Mark's community in Palestine and Matthew's community in the regions surrounding Palestine would potentially support a theory of Mark's gospel having been taken to a diaspora city with refugees and subsequently becoming a source for Matthew's gospel.

Theories as to the geographical location of Matthew's community will always involve a strong element of guesswork, it is not possible to decide anything definitively. Nothing can be concluded with any certainty, I will proceed assuming the location of Matthew's community was

located in a diaspora city and assuming that many of the themes pertinent to this city would have been mirrored to a greater or lesser extent in other possible locations.

One further detail which supports this thesis that the Matthean community were refugees is that Matthew's gospel is written in much more proficient Greek than is Mark (Brown & Meier, 1983, p.23); this is as we would expect, Mark's gospel having been written by a Judean or Galilean community operating in a proficient but second language. By the time Matthew's text was written, perhaps twenty years later, the community would have been immersed in a Greek speaking city, the next generation of this community would have been raised in a Greek city speaking Greek as a first language. If this were the history of Matthew's community then it is understandable that they might have embraced displacement as a significant biblical theme, and that they might have understood themselves as a displaced people and so seek to connect with the stories of displacement in the OT. The identity of one who is displaced is inevitably complex, it is likely that the sense of displacement for the Matthean community was both that also of being physically displaced from a piece of land, and of being emotionally displaced from a previous way of life.

As already discussed Matthew's text uses Mark as its principal source, much of Mark's gospel is taken directly into Matthew. Scholars argue (as already noted above Kebler, 1979, pp.13-14; Hooker 1991, p.8) that Mark was written around the time of the Jewish-Roman War, between ten and twenty years earlier than Matthew, it is my contention that the author of Matthew takes the words of Mark's text written in his pre or mid-war context and presents them to his post-war context of displacement. I will now briefly consider the political context of this displaced people.

Throughout the first century the Jewish people were a subject people, they had been so for many generations. Ordinary people lived under a very heavy economic burden. The details of the tax and tithing system changed over time, but the essential reality remained the same throughout the first century, the Roman Imperial machine extracted wealth from its subject peoples, sometimes directly and sometimes by means of client kings. Carter offers a brief overview

of Roman taxation policies both in a general sense and with specific reference to first century Palestine, Carter notes that Josephus identifies Jewish non payment of tribute as an act of war (Carter, 2001, pp.13-16). Wright gives an overview of the economic rule of first century Palestine noting the high levels of debt as a source of tension (Wright, 1992, p.169), debt being the result of unpaid taxes rather than of loans. Wright notes that one of the first acts of the revolt in 66<sup>CE</sup> is to burn the tax records (Wright, 1992, p.169). Post 70<sup>CE</sup> the Roman regime imposed the *Judaicus Fiscus*, a tax levied on all Jews across the empire as a punishment for the Jewish revolt, “from a report by the Roman historian Suetonius, one learns that the levying of the Jewish tax by the *fiscus Judaicus*, which had been introduced by Vespasian in the early seventies of the first century, was administered in a harsh way” (Heemstra, 2010, p.1-2). This tax was levied on all Jews, the Jewish community in the diaspora would have been expected to pay. It is likely that these economic differences might have caused tensions between Jews and Gentiles. Within the emerging forms of Christianity which embraced both Jews and Gentiles we can guess that these considerations might have been live subjects of debate. It is unclear how the Roman authorities assessed who was Jewish or not in relation to the *Judaicus Fiscus*. Carter suggests that the narrative at Matt 17:24-25a might be a discussion on whether or not to pay the *Judaicus Fiscus* (Carter, 2001, pp.130-144), Carter’s reading of this passage indicates that the Matthean community did choose to pay the tax rather than resist it and therefore that they identified as Jewish; of course it is harder to assess if this was done willingly or because payment was inevitable.

By the time of writing several generations of Jews had experienced, and been mentally and physically scarred by, oppression and war, all of this experience is important context for the writing of Matthew’s gospel, the gospel refers to these events throughout. In the infancy narrative we can read a clear allusion to such oppressive brutality in the killing of the babies at Matt 2:16-18. Added to these economic considerations, I suggested above that Matthew’s gospel was written in a diaspora community which was home to a significant number of displaced Jews from Palestine,



we can read the influence of the displacement experience in Matthew's infancy narrative, the infant Jesus and family are forced to flee to Egypt, and are unable to return to their home (Matt 2:13-15,22).

So how do the historical realities affect Matthew's infancy narrative? All of this context could explain why the theme of displacement might have had specific meaning for this community; it makes logical sense that a displaced community would reflect on previous generations of displacement to find meaning for their current situation. A religious people who have lived through displacement within recent memory would logically look for a religious response to their situation. However it is also important to note that these reasons of context only offer an explanation as to why Matthew's community might have been concerned with the theme of displacement, they do not offer conclusive proof that this community actually did have such a concern; it is the task of the main body of this work to survey the text and assess if such a theme is present or not.

**vi. Religious arguments for the significance of the theme of displacement.**

One of the features of post-70<sup>CE</sup> era Judaism is that there was no absolutely clear leadership or agreed expression of the religion. Neusner calls the period from 70-100<sup>CE</sup> formative Judaism (Overman, 1990, p.2); taking up Neusner's terminology Sim writes: "At the time of the Gospel of Matthew, formative Judaism was very much in its infancy and was clearly a nebulous and developing entity" (Sim, 1998, pp.114-115). A variety of different groups were asserting themselves and their thinking as being the right future for Judaism, the Matthean community was one of these groups. Sim argues that the perspective of the Matthean community was completely Jewish, they followed a "law-observant gospel and its wholly Jewish world view" (Sim, 1998, p.116) and also that the Matthean community "perceived itself to represent the true version of Judaism" (Sim, 1998, p.142). Similarly Saldarini proposes that:

The author of Matthew ... is most probably a Jew who, though expelled from the assembly in his city, still identifies as a member of the Jewish community and who supports obedience to the Jewish law according to the interpretation of Jesus (Salsarini, 1994, p.21).

Sim and Overman argue that the movement which was to become Rabbinic Judaism in later centuries, during the 70-100ce period slowly emerged and began to assert its leadership of Judaism, this naturally brought them into conflict with other groups who preached an alternative Judaism, the Matthean community was one such group (Sim, 1998, p.115-6, Overman,1990, pp.48-56). Sim argues that:

In the more fluid Judaism which characterised the era prior to the Jewish War, the small party of Christian Judaism, in Antioch and elsewhere, was doubtless considered by many Jews as a distinctive but legitimate expression of the Jewish faith. But in the wake of the Jewish revolt against Rome and the attempt by formative Judaism to instil some uniformity on the Jewish people, those smaller and less influential Jewish movements, such as the Matthean community, came to be categorised as separatist and deviant. (Sim, 1998, p.116)

Overman argues that in reaction to these attempts by the emerging rabbinic movement to bring uniformity there emerged a tension with other groups, Matthew's community is one example of such a group, this perhaps in some places resulted in Christians being put out of the synagogue (Overman, 1990, pp.48-56). Sim posits that the level of hostility in Matthew's gospel towards the Jewish leadership is to some extent caused by their closeness in religious outlook, Sim writes: "both the proponents of formative Judaism and the Matthean community share in common a number of religious practices, such as alms-giving, praying and fasting" (Sim, 1998, p.122). One indicator of the Torah obedience of the Matthean community is Matt 5:17-19 this passage suggests that the Matthean community was Torah obedient and had no intention of throwing out the Jewish law. Furthermore when Matt 15:17 is compared with its source text at Mark 7:19, Matthew's text omits the word of the Marcan narrator "thus he declared all foods clean" (NRSV) which suggests the Matthean community disagreed with the gospel of Mark on this point indicating that Matthew's community took a more Torah obedient position.

With Sim and Overman I consider Matthew's community to have been a Jewish group who had been expelled from their synagogue. Such an expulsion might well have been viewed as a further experience of displacement and so another reason why displacement might have been a significant theme in Matthew's gospel.

Having considered the relationship of the Matthean community to formative Judaism I will now consider how the Matthean community related to the Gentile community. If, as discussed above, we assume that the community was based in a diaspora city then they would have existed in the midst of a Gentile majority. Matthew's gospel includes positively presented gentile characters and there are narratives of Jesus travelling to gentile areas where he heals and exorcises (see 8:5-13, 8:28-34, 15:21-39). In the infancy narrative four (probably) gentile women are included as ancestors of Jesus, and gentile magi travel to the newly born Jesus. In Matt 8:11-12 Jesus says: "I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness" (NRSV). These examples present a positive approach to Gentiles. The women mentioned in the genealogy are gentiles who become fully part of the Jewish people, we can posit that this indicates a willingness to bring Gentiles into the Matthean Christian-Jewish community. Sim takes a contrary view arguing for a less gentile-friendly approach, in relation to the women in the genealogy that all four women were "seen as converts to Judaism" (Sim, 1998, p.219). I think that Sim fails to see that this gets right to the heart of Matthew's position, the Matthean community are not in favour of a gentile church which separates from obedience to the Torah as is possibly the case with Pauline Christianity, rather they are in favour of bringing gentiles fully into Torah obedient Judaism, thus that the women in the genealogy are converts to Judaism might be precisely why they are included in the gospel. The gospel's initial instruction that mission should only be to the Jews (Matt 10:5-6) is then broadened at the end (Matt 28:19) to include all nations. This reading is backed up by the use in Matthew's text of Isa 9:1-2 in Matt 4:15-16; Matthew's

Jesus adopts the Isaian vision of salvation of all peoples as his own. But these verses which speak of mission to all nations must be balanced with the concern for Torah obedience outlined above. For Matthew's text the way of Jesus is to bring all nations into Judaism not for Jews to leave Judaism behind. Where Sim's position has weight is in his argument that the gospel contains a number of texts which by implication slur the gentile community, for example Matt 5:47 "Do not even the Gentiles do the same?" (Sim, 1998, p.227). I do not believe that these verses invalidate my argument precisely because Matthew's text sees these converts as now fully Jewish and so no longer gentile.

What this religious context says more widely is that how one should relate to gentiles was a major concern for Matthew's community. Again this reinforces that the theme of displacement might have been important. How ought this community relate to the other in a land of exile? How can one remain true to your distinctiveness in the context of displacement? Once again none of this context is proof that displacement is a significant theme for Matthew's gospel, however as with the social and political context it gives us reason to understand why such a theme might have been significant.

#### **vii. Introduction to Matthew's Infancy narrative.**

The gospel of Matthew was written in the midst of the political and religious context outlined above. In this study I will be following Brown in defining the Infancy narrative as Matt 1:1 – 2:23 (Brown, 1993, pp.49-50). Brown discusses the possibility that Matthew's prologue runs from Matt 1:1-4:16, he describe the evidence as "interesting but not compelling" (Brown, 1993, p.50). There are certain themes which run through this section such as the narrative paralleling the story of Moses, and the use of two formula citation from the same section of Isaiah (Isa 7:14 at Matt 1:23 and Isa 9:1-2 at Matt 4:15-16). Brown argues that these details are evidence that the Infancy narrative is not an addition or afterthought to the gospel but rather integral to the gospel, but

nevertheless he define the Infancy narrative as being Matt 1:1 – 2:23 (Brown, 1993, p.50). I will follow Brown on this point. My chief reason for adopting this position is that the beginning of chapter three is the point at which Matthew's text begins to follow Mark's text, therefore I believe it is logical to consider Matt 1-2 as a distinct section written by the author before beginning the re-telling of Mark's text.

Brown notes that it is not possible to construct a single coherent Infancy narrative by combining Matthew and Luke (Brown, 1993, p.36). With this in mind I will not consider the question of historicity, indeed Brown argues that "close analysis of the infancy narratives makes it unlikely that either account is completely historical" (Brown, 1993, p.36); rather I will consider what is the text saying theologically, socially and politically.

Matthew's infancy divides into two distinct parts. First a genealogy which follows in the tradition of OT genealogies (Matt 1:1-1:17), this genealogy seeks to affirm Jesus' identity as a part of Jewish history and as a successor to certain key characters from that history, notably David and Abraham but also all the sons of Jacob and the line of Kings of Judah, and a link is made to more marginal characters such as Ruth, Rahab, Tamar and Uriah. Furthermore the genealogy also associates Jesus with the exile in Babylon which is the only event mentioned in this part of the text. The genealogy presents Jesus' credentials as a leader, and as the Messiah.

After the genealogy comes the narrative text (Matt 1:18-2:23). The narrative tells us of Jesus' birth then narrates the visit of the Magi, the threat to Jesus' young life, the family fleeing to Egypt, the death of the children of Bethlehem, and finally the family's return from Egypt to Judea then Galilee. The narrative is interspersed with five formula citations from the OT, later in this study I will discuss these citations relate to displacement. I will also discuss how the narrative evokes several OT stories or characters which relate to displacement. The narrative involves a story of displacement caused by the threat of violence, the family flee to Egypt and then later on their

return are displaced once more to a different land. Movement continues to be a key theme of the gospel as a whole.

**viii. The importance of the OT in Matthew's text**

Matthew's gospel was written at a time of crisis in Judaism, following the destruction of the temple there was a power vacuum concerning the leadership of the Jewish people, at the time Matthew was written the rabbinic movement was emerging but by no means the universally recognised leadership, Saldarini writes: "studies of the development of rabbinic Judaism after the destruction of the Temple demonstrate that the rabbis gained influence and then power in Palestinian society only gradually, over several centuries." (Saldarini, 1994, p.13). Matthew's gospel, written very early in this period, was written at least in part to make the case that the followers of Jesus have a claim to Jewish heritage. Matthew presents Jesus as a thoroughly Jewish character, his concern is to place Jesus in the context of Jewish history, one whose teaching is a natural next step in this long history. Matthew references the OT because he is seeking authority for his claims on the basis of Jewish religious history.

The gospel does not wish to present Jesus' teaching as a completely new innovation but rather to argue that these elements have been central to Judaism from the very beginning, Jesus is teaching a Judaism authentic to its primitive teaching fulfilling what has come before, for Matthew's text Jesus is very much in continuity with Jewish history. Matthew's text quotes extensively from the OT prophets who preached an outward looking form of Judaism; in the genealogy Matthew includes figures such as Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Uriah's wife who began as outsiders but were included in the people of Israel; and Matthew's text tells us the story of the Magi, gentiles who come to worship Jesus. Matthew's text is a strongly Jewish but inclusive presentation of Jesus. The diaspora context gives us a clue as to why Matthew's text might take such an approach, living in the midst of gentiles we can imagine that the Matthean community

might wish to draw in those who were sympathetic to the Jewish religion. Matthew's text is able to be inclusive without compromising on practice. Whether or not Matthew's community actually put into practise the message proclaimed in their gospel is not within the scope of this study.

It is important to note that Matthew's presentation of Jesus, and Judaism more widely in the context of the OT, is not a unique innovation in its time. After the destruction of the second temple in 70CE the emerging rabbinic movement was turning to the Torah and wider Jewish scripture to work out a new post-temple future for Judaism. Karen Armstrong argues that post-70CE the Pharisees "pioneered a spirituality in which Torah study replaced the temple as the chief means of encountering the divine presence." (Armstrong, 2007, p.81). Matthew's use of the OT sits in this wider context of a renewed Jewish study of scripture and a desire to define a new stage in Jewish history. Matthew's text agrees with many contemporary Jews that the Jewish scripture should be a basis for guiding the post-70CE era (Sigal, 1986, p.99), the point of disagreement is the centrality of Jesus, thus Matthew's text seeks to show how Jesus fits into Jewish history and scripture.

Matthew's text presents a Jesus who is in continuity with Jewish history, but the gospel is not merely a historical reflection, it is written in a political context, memories of the Jewish war would have loomed large in the collective memory. Matthew's gospel is not principally a text which looks backwards it is pointing a way forward. Throughout the gospel Matthew's text seeks to address the question of how his community and Judaism in general should live in this context of Imperial rule. Examples are taken from the OT which give us ways in which previous generations had responded to war, displacement and imperial rule. Three examples are: the citation from Isa 7 which alludes to the Assyrian crisis of the eighth century BCE, details in the narrative such as the killing of the infants which allude to the exodus narrative, and the citation from Jer 31:15 which speaks of the time of forced exile to Babylon. All three of these examples could be understood as

paralleling the historical context of being a long occupied and recently defeated nation under Roman rule.

Matthew's gospel claims a continuity with the history of Judaism. However this does not mean that Matthew's text is content with the status quo. The text believes that Jesus preached a significant reform in Judaism, and that Jesus had actively challenged the Jewish leadership of his day. In Matthew's Gospel the narrative looks in two directions, both forwards and backwards. The text seeks to present Jesus' reforms as a new future for Judaism, but at the same time the genealogy refers to Jewish history and the narrative evokes OT images and themes which seek to place Jesus in the context of Jewish history, placing him in continuity and association with the great figures and movements of Judaism. Matthew's text is concerned with presenting a new way of being Jewish in continuity with history, so in the Gospel Jesus is presented as the fruit of a new act of creation by God (see 3ii); he is presented as a new Moses (4bi), a new David (3iv), a new Abraham (3iv), a new Hezekiah (see discussion of Isa 7:14 in 4aii), and a new Joseph (4biii); these presentations are interwoven and not always consistently drawn. Overarching this association of Jesus with the great figures of Judaism Matthew's text is seeking to present Jesus as a type for the whole people of Israel, most emphatically Jesus embodies the story of Israel.

As already noted above the gospel responds to a particular social, religious and political situation; Matthew's text presents a Jesus whose words and actions are a challenge both to the power of Rome and emerging Rabbinic Judaism. In the infancy narrative Matthew's text presents Jesus as a successor to Abraham, Moses, David and Hezekiah the great leaders of Jewish history, by implication this presentation of Jesus as a leader is a challenge to those currently in power, as Carter writes: "The genealogy demonstrates, among other things, that God supervises human history, that God's purposes especially run through Israel (not Rome)" (Carter, 2001, p.60). Matthew's text is presenting Post-70<sup>CE</sup> Judaism with a figurehead; the text challenges its Jewish readers to choose to follow Jesus rather than the Emperor. Matthew's text also speaks to new



Jewish-Christian converts, for them the message is essentially the same, to follow Jesus rather than the emperor.

**ix. The Theme of displacement in Matthew's text**

I will now turn to the task of briefly outlining the ways in which Matthew's text might focus on the theme of displacement. Discussion of these themes will form the basis of following chapters. Wright argues that most first century Jews considered themselves to still be living in exile, he posits that geographically the Jewish exiles to Babylon may have moved back to their ancient home but the covenant between God and Israel had not been fully restored (Wright, 1992, pp.268-279); Wright argues:

They believed that, in all the sense which mattered, Israel's exile was still in progress. Although she had come back from Babylon, the glorious message of the prophets remained unfulfilled. Israel still remained in thrall to foreigners; worse, Israel's God had not returned to Zion. Nowhere in the so-called post-exilic literature is there any passage corresponding to 1 Kings 8.10 (Wright, 1992, pp.268-269)

Wright offers a series of OT passages as evidence for this position<sup>3</sup>, he writes:

The present age is still part of the 'age of wrath'; until the gentiles are put in their place and Israel, and the Temple, fully restored, the exile is not really over, and the blessings promised by the prophets are still to take place." (Wright, 1992, p.270)

For Wright first century Judaism was in a state of expectation and waiting for the restoration of Israel to its pre-exile covenant with God, Israel was displaced and had been for generations, this sense of displacement framed the religious thinking of the first century. Matthew's community as a sub-community within Judaism would have shared in this overarching sense of displacement, further displacements caused by war only added to this wider sense, the Matthean community in a diaspora city were in both physical exile and as Jews they were in a form of theological exile. Wright comments that Jews sought to understand their current displacement in terms of earlier

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<sup>3</sup> Is 52:8; Ezek 43:1-2,4-5.7; Neh 9:36; Tob 14:5-7; Bar 3:6-8; 2 Macc 1:27-9

stories of displacement, furthermore he argues that first-century Jews understood their exile to be the consequence of sin; so they looked to older traditions for their path out of exile, chiefly the Passover and Day of Atonement, by means of sacrifice the sin of Israel would be forgiven and restoration would become possible (Wright, 1992, p.273). Matthew's text connects into this wider tradition, to save from sin was to remove that which was keeping Israel in exile, and to bring about return. In the infancy narrative Matthew's text presents the problem of displacement, the exile is mentioned in the genealogy, and in the narrative section Jesus and his parents are displaced to Egypt, and then to Galilee. The person of Jesus follows the path of displacement already followed by Israel. We are told that his name 'Jesus' means one who will "save his people from their sin" (Matt 1:21b NRSV), the implication being (following Wright) that Jesus will bring about the return from exile. How this restoration is achieved is a subject for studies of the later chapters of Matthew's Gospel, it will suffice to argue here that the infancy narrative presents the problem of displacement, and promises us that Jesus will be the one to solve this problem.

**a) The Genealogy**

In this study I will be following the argument of Hood that the genealogy is a "summary of Israel's story" (Hood, 2011, p.62) retelling in miniature the long history of the people of Israel. I will also be following Nolland who argues that there is significance to the annotation to the standard form of the genealogy (Nolland, May 1996, p.117), in this study I will comment on some of these annotations. Of particular importance in my discussion will be the work of Myles who argues that the genealogy emphasises the theme of forced displacement and exile (Myles, 2013, p.40).

Following Nolland's position that annotations to the genealogy are significant, Piotrowski proposes that one such annotation to Matthew's genealogy is an interrupted chiasm between Matt 1:1 and Matt 1:17:

- Matt 1:1 a. Jesus Christ
- b. David
- c. Abraham
- Matt 1:17 c'. Abraham
- b'. David
- d. Deportation to Babylon
- a'. the Christ

This chiasm is interrupted by the deportation to Babylon, following this deportation the text continues with “After the deportation” (1:12a NRSV), there is no restoration of the Davidic monarchy (Piotrowski, 2015, p.193). Piotrowski therefore argues that “[*the*] third era can be defined, therefore, as the unending exile when there is no Davidic King. With Jesus Christ, therefore, the end of the exile is now in view” (Piotrowski, 2015, p.198). I agree with Piotrowski that the structure of the genealogy emphasises the deportation and exile as an important theme. This position is given further weight by the choice of characters listed as Jesus’ ancestors, at least fifteen can be explicitly connected to forced displacement, itineracy or homelessness (Myles, 2013, p.37). Myles argues that “In the genealogy, the numerous intertextual echoes of episodes of forced displacement, wandering and exile within the remembered history of the Old Testament, ..., construct a marginal identity for the gospel’s protagonist” (Myles, 2013, p.40). This Matthean presentation of Jesus as one on the margins sits neatly and logically alongside Carter’s argument that the gospel is positioning Jesus as an alternative to the Empire, Matthew’s text presents Jesus as a type for the Jewish people, a figure who was marginal and forcibly displaced by the Imperial power just as the Jewish people have been time and again. However in the eyes of God this man and this nation are at the centre of history. Carter argues that Matthew’s text is presenting a worldview which places Jesus at the centre of human history in deliberate opposition to the Roman worldview which placed the Emperor at the centre, he writes: “Imperial theology proclaims ... that the gods have appointed Rome to rule an empire without limits” (Carter, 2013, p.60); he continues: “The Gospel’s assertion in the opening genealogy that God’s purpose, not Rome’s, are

being worked out in human history, and that those purposes run through Israel not Rome collide with these Imperial claims” (Carter, 2013, p.61).

In my discussion as well as the explicit mention of the Babylonian exile I will focus on several other key themes in the genealogy, the text’s references to the theme of creation, the emphasis given to David and Abraham, and the inclusion of five women. I will attempt to assess whether or not each of these themes relates to the theme of displacement and attempt to make a judgement as to extent to which exile is a significant theme for Matthew’s genealogy.

#### **b) The Narrative**

In my discussion of the infancy narrative text (1:18-2:23) I will focus on two different ways in which the text references the OT. In 4a) I will discuss Matthew’s use of formula citations. Isa 7:14, Jer 31:15, Mic 5:2, Hos 11:1 and the citation at Matt 2:23. I will discuss each of these texts in relations to their OT context looking at the larger passage from which these three citations are taken. I will discuss how these citations refer to either a situation of displacement or of a warning of coming displacement in their OT context.

In 4b) I will discuss how Matthew’s text alludes to OT narratives drawing on OT stories, here I will give a brief overview of the ways in which the text might be referencing the theme of displacement.

In the infancy narrative text (1:18-2:23) we read a narrative which involves fleeing danger. Joseph and his wife and child flee the persecution of Herod (Matt 2:13-15), again when they return the family are unable to settle in their first destination (Matt 2:22-23). This double experience of displacement is a further emphasis of the theme.

Myles finds significance in the use of the word ἀναχωρέω in Matthew’s text. ἀναχωρέω is used four times (2:12,13,14,22) in the infancy narrative and a further six in the rest of the gospel

(4:12; 9:24; 12:15; 14:13; 15:21; 27:5)<sup>4</sup> (Myles, 2013, p.33). Myles notes that this word can denote both a simple departure and/or taking refuge, a forced departure (Myles, 2013, p.33 following Bauer, 1999, p.75), Trenchard's dictionary agrees with Myles offering the definitions "to go away / to withdraw / to take refuge" (Trenchard, 2003, p.10); Myles argues that the context of where ἀναχωρέω is used indicates that Matthew's intention is to signify a forced displacement (Myles, 2013, p.33). It is possible that Myles makes too much of Matthew's use of ἀναχωρέω, Mounce's dictionary translates the word much more neutrally as "to depart/to go away"<sup>5</sup> not including 'to take refuge' of Trenchard's dictionary, that Mounce left out this definition suggests it is a secondary meaning of the word, although it would be wise not to draw too many conclusions from this omission. Matthew also uses the word φεύγω which more means more explicitly "to flee / to escape" (Trenchard, 2003, p.166)<sup>6</sup> albeit only once in Matthew's infancy narrative (2:13)<sup>7</sup>. However whatever the meaning of the word ἀναχωρέω the narrative context makes it explicitly clear that the family are fleeing danger.

As already noted above Wright, Eloff and Piotrowski all argue that for Matthew the deportation to Babylon is an ongoing reality; Israel has, according to Matthew's text, never returned from exile (Wright, 1992, pp.268-279; Eloff, 2004, pp.83-84; Piotrowski, 2015, p.193). Eloff argues that because the land remained under foreign rule the return under Zerubbabel was for Matthew unimportant (Eloff, 2004, pp.83-84), he writes:

"it seems reasonable to suggest .... That one major reason for Matthew's Gospel was to present in Jesus of Nazareth .... A solution to the problem of the exile, not only for the 'lost sheep of Israel' (Matt 10:6) but for all nations (Matt 28:19,20; cf. Gen 12:1-3)" (Eloff, 2004, p.85)

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<sup>4</sup> There are four use of ἀναχωρέω in the NT outside of Matthew – Mark 3:7; John 6:15; Acts 23:19, 26:31 (Myles, 2013, p.33)

<sup>5</sup> <https://billmounce.com/greek-dictionary/anachoreo>

<sup>6</sup> Mounce offers a similar translation: <https://billmounce.com/greek-dictionary/pheugo>

<sup>7</sup> There are six other uses of φεύγω in Matthew 3:7; 8:33; 10:23; 23:33; 24:16; 26:56; and there are twenty-two uses in the NT outside of Matthew.

While I think Eloff makes too much of this theme I am in agreement that the Babylonian exile is a significant theme for Matthew. Piotrowski offers a more convincing argument for the significance of the exile for Matthew pointing out that the exile is the only event mentioned in the genealogy, furthermore as already noted above it interrupts the flow of the text.

Davies and Allison also follow this theme that the exile was important for Matthew, they note that in several apocalyptic OT<sup>8</sup> sources (Daniel, Enoch, Baruch) the epoch of Exile comes immediately before the epoch of redemption, so they argue that Matthew follows this tradition in narratively placing Jesus' birth at the end of a period of exile (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.187).

In 4b) I will discuss how Matthew alludes to four OT episodes: the Moses story, the creation, the Joseph story, and the Balaam story. I will attempt to assess how Matthew might be attempting to use these stories to emphasise the theme of displacement. Both Moses and Joseph are characters who experience displacement, they are displaced themselves early in life then later are central to the larger movement of Israel. I will argue that Matthew's story of the Magi evokes the character of Balaam, the Balaam story takes place in the desert of the Exodus in the midst of displacement, likewise the Magi story is directly linked to a displacement to Egypt. The creation stories are also evoked, this allusion links to the theme of return, Jesus is presented in Matthew's text as a new beginning, a restart for Israel and answer to the problem of displacement.

In this study my task will be to assess the significance of the theme of displacement for Matthew's text. Above I have highlighted briefly some areas of the text where the theme of displacement is present, and I have argued as to why the theme may have been relevant to Matthew's community from the perspective of their political and social context. My task now is to test the plausibility of displacement as a theme with the detail of the text and to judge whether or not it is a significant theme. My questions are:

1. To what extent is displacement a significant theme in Matthew's infancy narrative.

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<sup>8</sup> As per my preliminary notes I use the term OT in its widest sense.

2. Where the theme of displacement can be established, how is the OT used within the text to present and expound on the theme?

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **HOW MATTHEW'S TEXT USES THE OT**



## **i. Introduction to the use of the OT in Matthew's infancy narrative**

In the infancy narrative we find two distinct genres of literature. The Gospel begins with a genealogy, then from 1:18 moves into a narrative style. Through the infancy narrative Matthew's text locates Jesus firmly in the religious context of OT theology. In his book *The New Moses*, Allison argues that throughout Matthew's Gospel the author is implicitly drawing parallels between Jesus and other figures, stating that it "must be reckoned a compositional habit of Matthew" (Allison, 1993, p.137). It is very difficult to generalise, but I will attempt to summarise and discuss the various ways in which Matthew's text uses the OT. Matthew's text uses the OT in three ways, OT citations, mentions of OT characters and events, and OT allusions. In this chapter I will discuss each type of use.

In this study I will be discussing the theme of displacement; as discussed in chapter one Wright, Eloff and Piotrowski all argue that the theme of displacement or exile is significant to Matthew's reading of the OT (Wright, 1992, pp.268-272; Eloff, 2004, pp.76-85; Piotrowski, 2015, pp.189-203), I will not repeat my discussion here. I will discuss the use of the OT in Matthew's text to evoke the theme of displacement, asking two questions of the text:

- 1) To what extent is displacement a significant theme in Matthew's infancy narrative.
- 2) Where the theme of displacement can be established, how is the OT used within the text to present and expound on the theme?

Before beginning to discuss these questions I will attempt to give an overview of scholarly thought on the use of the OT in Matthew's gospel particularly focussing on the infancy narrative, and to set out a methodology for assessing the legitimacy and relevance of OT references.

In my previous chapter I discussed the possibility that Matthew's community were likely living with the collective memory of the having lived through the Jewish-Roman war of 66-70<sup>CE</sup>. It is possible that a proportion of Matthew's community in the diaspora were Jewish refugees who had fled Palestine during the war. The concept of displacement as a theme within Matthew's text in the context of a displaced community hoping for return would likely have been a powerful story

for this community. My argument is that Matthew's text uses the OT at least in part to highlight this theme and to draw parallels between the context of the Matthean community and the stories of the OT.

Below in 4a) I will discuss Beale's argument that the use of Hos 11:1 in Matthew's text is linked to the theme of exile (Beale, 2012), and Menken's argument that Matthew's citation of Jer 31:15 is also linked to the theme of exile (Menken, 2000). All of these narrative allusions mirror the events of the infancy narrative which narrates a story of threat, displacement to Egypt and then return from Egypt.

I will also discuss the theory proposed by Dodd (1952) and developed by and Beale (2012 & 2014) that OT references refer to a wider range of biblical knowledge than just the verse, character or episode being evoked, the NT author assumes his audience have a certain knowledge of the OT.

When there are references to the OT it is very difficult to be sure of how much the Matthean author knows about the text he references and how much he is assuming his audience to know, does the author of Matthew know the wider text which surrounds the words he cites? Does he know the original context? Or is he quoting from memory? Is the author of Matthew's knowledge of the OT based directly on written texts or on hearing texts read in Synagogue worship?

Matthew's text uses the OT in three different ways, through citations from the OT, through the mention of OT characters, and through what I will refer to as OT allusions. By allusions I mean storylines, vignettes or details which evoke an OT character or narrative. Citations from the OT are a clear use of the OT, the questions for discussion is to what purpose is he using these citations. Similarly the naming of an OT character such as David or Abraham is a clear reference to that character, again the question is to what purpose. Allusions are, however, a more complex use of the OT, before considering the purpose one must first determine some criteria for determining

where there is an allusion and where there is not an allusion. I will begin by discussing the use of citations in Matthew's text, then move on to characters and allusions.

## **ii. The Fulfilment citations**

In the narrative section of the Infancy narrative (1:18-2:23) Matthew's text explicitly quotes from the OT five times, in four instances the text introduces these citations as fulfilling a prophecy (1:22-23; 2:15; 2:17-18; 2:23)<sup>9</sup>. Brown argues that these citations are a Matthean addition to a pre-Matthean narrative (Brown, 1993, pp.99-101). France takes this position further arguing against the citation having been added by a later editor, the citations are the work of the author of Matthew (France, 1985, p.39).

Luz makes an important observation that in Matthew's gospel as a whole the word πληρώω (to fulfill) is used frequently when the author (as the narrator) cites the OT, for Luz there is a contrast in this method of reading the OT, and the method of interpretation used by other contemporary groups. For other contemporary readers of the OT the reading method begins with the text and uses it to interpret the present, whereas Luz argues that the methodology of the author of Matthew as narrator is to begin with the events of Jesus' life and reflect on them in the light of the OT. (Luz, 1989, pp.158-159) Put more simply, in the citations which are in the voice of a narrator, Matthew's text does not begin with the OT and search for its relevance in his era, he rather begins with the events of Jesus' life and looks back into the OT for words and narratives which prefigured the life of Jesus. This methodology, along with Luz's assumption that the author may not have possessed complete OT texts, to some extent explains why for Luz some OT texts seem to be used in Matthew's gospel in ways which do not always fit neatly with their seeming OT

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<sup>9</sup> The fourth citation Jer 31:15 at Matt 2:18 is not introduced as a fulfilment, the most convincing explanation for the lack of this framing is given by Brown, "Matthew's reluctance to attribute to God an evil purpose: that He would have brought about the death of the children in order to fulfil a prophecy." (Brown, 1993, p.205)

meaning; below I will argue against Luz's position although I accept Luz's argument that we must be cautious in determining what is the OT meaning of a cited verse.

Hamilton, like Luz, argues that the gospel text accepts that the OT authors were speaking to their own context, however the text: "sees in the biblical narrative a divinely intended pattern of event" (Hamilton, 2008, p.233). OT texts are theological writings about events, Matthew's text uses these theologically written stories of events which took place centuries earlier to mirror and give increased meaning to contemporary events. This is an important concept which I believe is central to the relationship of Matthew's text to the OT, the author is interpreting the OT in the light of Jesus' life, and narrating Jesus' life in the light of the OT.

The citations present a challenge to scholars because at times Matthew's text seems to be using them in a way that is not fully in harmony with their OT context. For example, Beale notes that Hos 11:1 is "a mere historical reflection, but Matthew's text clearly understands it as a direct prophecy that is fulfilled in Christ." (Beale, 2012, p.697), Menken similarly comments in relation to the use of Jer 31:15 at Matt 2:18: "what is the sense of seeing a prophecy about mourning in Ramah realized in a massacre in Bethlehem?" (Menken, 2000, p.111). Matthew's text seems at first reading to be lifting these verses out of their context and assigning to them a new relevance in contradiction to their natural contextual meaning. My argument will challenge this position, I will argue that Matthew's text is aware of the original OT context of these verses and that the text is using these citations with reference to their OT context, albeit by inserting them into the gospel the text is applying them to Jesus' life and thereby investing them with new meaning for Matthew's community.

Dodd in his 1952 study *According to Scripture*, argued that quotations from the OT are included in much of the NT writings on the assumption that readers or hearers would be aware of a wider passage (Dodd, 1952, p.61). Dodd's study remains significant, and Moyise engages with it and explains the argument:

quotations were only the tip of the iceberg and are only understandable on the assumption that the readers would be aware of the larger context. Thus the reference to Judas's successor in Ps 69:25 only makes sense if the reader is aware that the whole psalm is about Christ's suffering. (Moyise, 2001, p.12)

Moyise agrees to an extent and argues that the reality is more complex in places and less certain in others. That is, Dodd's assertion holds for certain OT passages but in other places it is much harder to be sure (Moyise, 2013, p.74). In contrast, Beale follows Dodd's methodology more closely, as in his interpretation of Matthew's use of Hos 11:1:

Matthew's quotation shows exegetical and "grammatical historical" sensitivity to the immediate context of Hos 11:2-11 together with the broader context of the entire book, (Beale, 2012, pp.710-711).

Beale's argument is that even though at face value Matthew's text turns a historical statement into a prophecy when the verse is read in the wider context of Hosea the use of it in Matthew's text is more intelligible, Hos 10:14-15 which immediately precedes the verse quoted speaks of:

When Mothers were dashed in pieces with their children. Thus it shall be done to you, O Bethel, because of your great wickedness. At the dawn the king of Israel shall be utterly cut off.

(Hos 10:14b-15 NRSV)

For Beale this parallels the narrative of King Herod's slaughter of infants that precedes the use of Hos 11:1 in Matthew's text (Beale, 2012, p.711). Matthew's text is using this verse because of, not in spite of, its contextual meaning in Hosea; Beale develops this argument (2012) in a later article (2014), I will discuss his later position further below. Moyise offers a discussion of several uses of the OT in Matthew's infancy narrative, I have included Moyise in my discussions in 4a. Moyise offers no overarching approach to the use of the OT in Matthew's text concluding "It might come as a disappointment that we cannot give an objective answer to the question" (Moyise, 2013, p.104). Although I take into account aspects of Moyise's position, it is the approach of Beale which I will be following when I discuss citations in this study. I consider that Beale's position better

takes into account the depth of knowledge and ongoing engagement with the OT which would have been part of the life of the Matthean community.

Menken in his discussion of the use of Jer 31:15 argues that the OT context of this verse is that of Judah being taken into exile by the Babylonians in 587<sup>BCE</sup>; Matthew's text, like Jeremiah's text, is evoking the image of Rachel as a mother to Israel weeping at her children's suffering again as she did in Jeremiah (Menken, 2000, pp.110-111). Matthew's text has already mentioned the exile in Babylon in the genealogy (1:11-12) thus it is logical to assume that this connection was consciously in mind when citing Jer 31:15. Furthermore reading the wider context of this text in Jeremiah we can discern a clear logic for why Matthew's text might have cited this Jeremiah text, Jeremiah speaks poetically about the sadness and pain of exiles being taken away to Babylon, but a verse later (Jer 31:16-17) there are words of hope that the exiles will return, Rachel is instructed not to weep because "they shall come back from the land of the enemy" (Jer 31:16b NRSV). It is easy to see why Matthew's text might have included this verse as a pointer to a passage which speak of great suffering but which will in time lead to joy. There is a parallel between the Jeremiah passage (suffering and exile followed by return and restoration) and Jesus' subsequent fleeing to Egypt before returning to Judea then Galilee; and as highlighted above there is a parallel with the historical context of the Matthean community. Matthew's methodology when using citations is summarised by Beale in an annotated citation from R.T. France who writes:

"Matthew ... was deliberately compassing a chapter rich in potential exegetical bonuses, so that the more fully a reader shared the religious traditions and scriptural erudition of the author [i.e. the OT context], the more he was likely to derive from his reading, while at the same time there was a surface meaning sufficiently uncomplicated for even the most naive reader to follow it ... the bonus meanings convey an increasingly rich and positive understanding of the person and role of the Messiah, not integrated into a tidy theological scheme, but diverse and suggestive for those with eyes to see."

(Beale, 2012, pp.711-712 citing France, 1981, pp.233-251; brackets added by Beale)

In a 2014 article Beale develops his position further, he argues that we must assume around every use of the OT in the NT that there is what he terms a peripheral vision; a range of meaning which is known to the author and to his immediate contemporary audience and so does not need to be expanded in detail. Thus each citation is what Beale, borrowing from previous scholars, refers to as “thick descriptive” (Beale, 2014, p.264-265). Beale writes of NT authors that:

“There is always a related range of meaning that appropriately is an expansion of the explicit meaning. All speakers and writers, including ancient writers, are aware of more than what they are directly saying in their speech act.” (Beale, 2014, p.265).

The challenge for a modern reader is how to access this range of meaning, Beale argues that one method is to look more widely at the OT texts which Matthew’s text cites, the wider concept and theology of the OT passages and books from which Matthew’s citations come form the basis of at least a part of Matthew’s peripheral vision. As an example Beale refers to the use of Hos 11:1 at Matt 2:15. If we look at just the text of Hosea which is cited in Matthew’s text then we might conclude that Matthew’s text is misusing this text from Hosea, the gospel is presenting as a prophecy a text which was written as a historical statement about the Exodus from Egypt centuries before Hosea is writing. However, Beale argues, if we look at the book of Hosea more widely we can read predictions of a future redemption from Egypt, thus Beale argues:

“by extending Hosea’s peripheral vision to the end of the chapter and to other parts of the book, we can see that he understood that the first exodus was a pattern foreshadowing a second, end-time exodus. So Matthew is just following Hosea’s own wider, peripheral, typological hermeneutic, which he sees beginning to be fulfilled in Jesus.” (Beale, 2014, p.276)

Later in this study I will look in detail at the use of OT citations in Matthew’s infancy narrative. I will argue that when Matthew’s text cites a verse from the OT the significance given to the words is usually greater than their immediate meaning. In order to discern this greater significance I will assume that the Matthean author assumed that his readers were/are familiar with the wider OT

passage from which the citation is taken. For example when considering Hos 11:1 I will assume that the Matthean author intends for this text to be understood in the context of the book of Hosea, not as a stand-alone verse the meaning of which is disconnected from its original OT context. Of course such an approach opens up a much wider scope of study in determining what is the meaning of Hos 11:1 within Hosea, and prior to this question what are the themes of Hosea in general. I am aware that the methodology I am following opens up a wide range of background study. I will limit this work to the theme of displacement focussing on how Matthew's text uses the OT to highlight this theme.

The picture is further complicated by Jeannine Brown and N.T. Wright who both carry this line of thought further than Beale, they argue that it is legitimate to include in an authors' overall meaning certain meanings of which he was not explicitly conscious as he wrote. J.Brown writes that it is legitimate to take seriously:

those sub-meanings than an author may not be attending to or fully aware of as he or she writes, yet that fit the overall pattern of meaning the author willed to communicate in the text (J. Brown, 2007, p.108).

Referring to theories of reading, Wright argues:

It must also do justice, at the text/author stage, both to the fact that the author intended certain things, and that the text may well contain in addition other things – echoes, evocations, structures, and the like – which were not present to the author's mind, and of course may well not be present to the reader's mind. (Wright, 1992, p.62)

The challenge of course is how to assess the presence of a sub-meaning of which an author is not aware? While J. Brown's position might well have merit it will be near on impossible to use it to make any definite claims of Matthew's text, it must suffice to take this line of thinking no further than does Beale, to affirm that there are occasions when the author of Matthew was explicitly aware of a wider range of meaning in the words he cites. On occasions there is possibly a layer of unconscious meaning which is a consequence of being part of a culture imbued with OT images and ideas in everyday life, but this layer of meaning remains obscure.



This method of interpretation is not shared by all scholars, Raymond Brown takes a much lighter approach to the relevance of the context of OT passages in Matthew's gospel. Discussing the use of Isa 7:14 at Matt 1:23 Brown argues that Matthew's text is interested in the identification of the child as a Davidic ruler, Matthew's text seeks to place Jesus in this role, wider considerations contemporary to the Isaiah text such as the politics of the Assyrian crisis are not in Brown's view relevant. However Brown does not limit himself to just considering the cited OT text, in order to justify that the gospel is referring to the child of Isa 7:14 Brown notes that Isa 7:13 mentions the 'House of David', Brown's position is therefore a softer version of that argued by Dodd and Beale; textual context is important but in a limited way (Brown, 1993, pp.149-150). In general I will be following the position of Dodd, and the scholars already noted who follow his methodology, that Matthew's text uses citations as references to wider texts. I will keep in mind the position of Raymond Brown that references to the OT context have their limitations, it is important not to read too much into the text, the use of the OT in Matthew's text is driven by the author's contemporary theological purposes, the OT text is a tool by which Jesus is presented rather than Jesus being a means by which to re-tell the OT stories.

Returning to Moyise, like Brown, he also offers a more generalised challenge to the position outlined above. For example in relation to the theme of Jesus as son of David, Moyise argues that it is difficult to attribute a particular proof text as a prophecy pointing directly to Jesus, the picture is more complicated. Moyise prefers to look at the theme much more widely, and he illustrates his position drawing on Crossan and Borg:

Jesus is not the fulfilment of miraculously specific predictions. Rather he is the fulfilment of the Law and the Prophets in a much more comprehensive sense .... He is their crystallization, their expression in an embodied life. He decisively reveals and incarnates the passion of God as disclosed in the Law and the Prophets – the promise and hope for a very different kind of world

from the world of Pharaoh and Caesar, the world of domination and empire. (Crossan and Borg, 2009. p.224)

For Moyise the use of specific OT texts in the infancy narratives is to back up an argument which is already being made in a more general sense, that Jesus is the Son of David because he fulfils the role of the Son of David, specific OT references are included as part of this wider strategy. (Moyise, 2013, pp. 43-44).

Although I would agree with Moyise that the gospel authors were purposeful about their portrayal of Jesus, I would place a greater emphasis on the deep knowledge of OT texts in the cultural environment. My position relies on an assumption that the author of Matthew had access to and a good knowledge of the texts he cites, as opposed to using verses from memory, or a single verse from a collection of disparate verses. I will address the question of which texts the author of Matthew had access to below. I am aware that at times the citations used in Matthew's text vary from any known version of the OT text he cites, when these adaptations occur it is important to consider (if possible) whether these adaptations are the work of the author of Matthew or from another source, and if they are Matthean what significance then do they hold.

In this study I will argue that when Matthew's text makes a reference to the OT, be it a citation or an allusion to a character or narrative, the text is intentionally wishing to link this reference to the significance of Jesus; following the position of Beale outlined above I will be conscious that behind this intention is a whole range of received knowledge concerning the text quoted or allusion made, while acknowledging a wider breadth of received knowledge I will limit this study to what can be known from the OT text. Some of this knowledge would have been at the forefront of the author's mind as he wrote his gospel, and a larger amount of it would have been in the background, a picture of this particular OT character, event or text, built up over a lifetime of hearing the OT read, which influenced the gospel author as he wrote. The challenge of any reader at more than 1900 years remove from a text is how to know what was in the author's

mind consciously and unconsciously as he wrote. My approach will be to look for a wide range of meaning in Matthew's allusions and attempt to build a picture of what these references might have meant, and why the author might have chosen to include them in his infancy narrative. My analysis will be based on assessing these references and the reasons why they might have been included, I will make a judgement as to which allusions I believe it is most reasonable to assume might be intended by the author of Matthew. This is a proposal towards an understanding of the author's intentions, it is not possible to assert my position strongly; certainty is unattainable.

### **iii. Which OT texts did the Matthean community have?**

Before making any kind of judgement about the use of OT text in Matthew's gospel it is important to discern which texts the author may have had access to, and in what form was this access. Moyise notes that since the discovery of the scrolls at Qumran we now know that there existed collections of scriptures which brought together a compilation of different OT texts (Moyise, 2001, pp.12-13). It is impossible to ascertain with certainty what written sources were available to the Matthean community but it is possible that such collections were available, these collections may have included sections of OT books short of their full text. It is also possible (indeed likely) that varying Greek versions of OT texts existed.

The positions of Dodd, Beale, Menken and France which I outlined above assume that the author of Matthew had access to the wider OT passages from which Matthew's text takes its citation; they hold this position on the basis of Matthew's text itself, the positioning of these citations shows that the author has a wider knowledge of the OT context. A counter argument to this position is offer by Luz who argues that due to disputes with the synagogue Matthew's community no longer had access to the synagogue library, and therefore did not have access to a comprehensive collection of Jewish scripture (Luz, 1989, p.157). Luz argues on the basis of the

great variance between the accuracy of different citations. Luz argues that the only OT text which the Matthean community possessed was a copy of Isaiah in the LXX translation (Luz, 1989, p.157).

Brown (1993) and Menken (2000), however, both disagree with Luz. Brown discusses in detail the potential version of Jer 31:15 which could have been Matthew's source text at Matt 2:18. He concludes that the variation from the LXX is not, as Luz argues, because he was citing the text from memory, rather that the author of Matthew was translating the text from a greek version close to the MT (Brown, 1993, pp.221-223). Menken's much lengthier discussion of the possible sources for Matthew's citation of Jer 31:15 draws the conclusion that the author of Matthew possessed a Greek Jeremiah text which is no longer extant (Menken, 2000, p.125). Given the academic consensus against Luz; that of Dodd (1952), France (1981), Wright (1992), R. Brown (1993), Menken (2000), J. Brown (2007) and Beale (2012 & 2014); I will assume that the author of Matthew had access to a larger library of OT texts.

There is some debate among scholars as to whether or not the author of Matthew had a knowledge of Hebrew, and therefore whether he translated some of his citations from Hebrew (Brown, 1993, pp.221-223) or that his text was influenced by a Syriac version (Nolland, Oct 1996). To hold such a position would be to assume that the author of Matthew had access to a Hebrew text or Syriac text and that he had a knowledge of Hebrew and/or Syriac. There is, as yet, no scholarly consensus on this question, therefore I will not take this line of enquiry any further for the sake of space.

Another aspect of the use of the OT in Matthew's gospel which is important to note is that the author's oral knowledge of Jewish scripture was probably very extensive, this is evidenced by the extent to which Matthew's gospel is imbued with OT references, citations, allusions and characters. The author would not have been able to compose such a work without a good background knowledge of Jewish sacred writing. Wright argues that the average first century Jew would have had a good oral knowledge of Jewish prayers and psalms (Wright, 1992, p.233). So

while the author might not have been able to accurately quote texts or locate verses in the texts he perhaps did not possess physically, nevertheless he is familiar with the narratives and characters of these scriptures from having heard the stories read in the synagogue and from storytelling. Matthew's text suggests a familiarity with the literature of the OT, expressions are used which evoke OT expressions, the author assumes these will be understood by his readers. For example the mention of "his star at its rising" (Matt 2:2 NRSV) evokes Balaam's prophecy (Num 24:17) (Brown, 1993, p.168), or the angel's words to Joseph "Get Up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel" (Matt 2:20 NRSV) which evokes Moses' return to Egypt (Exod 4:20) (Brown, 1993, p.217). This observation is important when considering allusions, an allusion to the Creation, the Exodus or the Babylonian Exile could be made on the basis of a good general knowledge of the OT rather than with reference to a specific text.

#### **iv. How are OT characters and events used in Matthew's Infancy narrative?**

Thus far most of this discussion has focussed on the use of citations from the OT in Matthew's text. I will now discuss the use of OT characters and events in Matthew's text while keeping in mind the methodology outlined above. Concerning the use of citations my task is to assess whether Matthew's text takes account of the wider context of the OT text being cited, I will apply the same methodology to the use of OT characters and OT events as I applied above to the formula citations; when Matthew's text evokes a character or event from the OT it is being referred to in the context of its (his or her) position in the OT. Obviously one difficulty is immediately apparent, a citation refers to a particular passage of text which can be specifically consulted, we can read the OT verses which come before and after the citation quoted in Matthew's text, we can assess the spirit of the wider text; whereas with a character or an event the reference is much less specific, consequentially it is much harder to argue as to the intentionality of referencing a particular character. In the next section I will discuss how I will use a methodology suggested by

Allison (Allison, 1991, pp. 21-23) to assess the validity of OT allusions in Matthew's text. I will not pre-empt that discussion here, later in this study I will also apply parts of this methodology to the Matthean use of OT characters.

Throughout the infancy narrative Matthew's text closely associates Jesus with a variety of OT characters. The first example of this use of the OT is found in the genealogy. Even before analysing this genealogy in detail we can conclude that Matthew's text is associating Jesus with a whole catalogue of OT characters, the majority of the characters mentioned in the genealogy are taken from the OT, certain sections of the genealogy are taken from OT genealogies (see Ruth 4:18-22). Matthew's genealogy is the first, and a particularly direct, example of the drawing of parallels between Jesus and OT characters in Matthew's gospel. Later in this study I will discuss Matthew's genealogy in more depth. I will argue (with Myles, 2013) that displacement is a key theme running through the stories of the characters mentioned in the genealogy, and furthermore (with Wainwright, 1998) that these characters exemplify God's faithfulness bringing them from displacement to restoration through times of difficulty. This is the overarching theme evoked by the genealogy, admittedly not every character displays these traits some are present in the genealogy simply because they are mentioned in the OT tradition; however I will argue that many of the characters whom Matthew's text chooses to emphasise by deviating from the usual pattern or by special mention display this characteristic. I will discuss the highlighting by Matthew's text of Abraham, David, and the women mentioned in the genealogy, many of these characters were in some way displaced from their geographical location or familial identity but through God's initiative were restored or became a key part of Israel's history; these characters form a pattern in which Jesus follows.

Matthew's text is presenting Jesus as a figure who both follows and emulates a succession of Jewish figures. Matthew's text is arguing, as Garland writes in his book *Reading Matthew*, that "All biblical history has been leading up to the birth of the messiah" (Garland, 1993, p.15).

Wainwright expands on this idea suggesting the significance this text might have had for Matthew's first readers:

"For those who believed that this history continued in their communities, it is a rereading of an old story, creating a new story about God's continuing participation in the lives of a people..." (Wainwright, 1998, p.55)

In this study I will argue that the theme of displacement is a significant reason as to why certain characters and events are mentioned in Matthew's text, I will assess the extent to which this element of displacement in the OT narratives is central to why they are included in Matthew's text.

#### **v. How are OT allusions used in Matthew's Infancy narrative?**

The last and most complex way in which Matthew's text references the OT is through allusions. These allusions are both details and story-arcs which remind the biblically-literate of characters and events from the OT. Allison argues that the author of Matthew wrote for an audience who were familiar with the OT, he writes:

"Readers familiar with the Greek Bible – and Matthew wrote with such in mind – would presumably have intuited a continuity between the story of Israel's sacred history and Jesus' story and hence would have read with solemnity, in anticipation of profound significance." (Allison, 1993, p.6)

Allison illustrates his assertion by drawing a comparison between Matt 2:20 and Exod 4:19-20:

"But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead'"

Matt 2:19-20

And the Lord said to Moses in Midian, 'Go back to Egypt; for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.' So Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on an ass, and went back to the land of Egypt."

Exod 4:19-20

(Biblical texts taken from Allison, 1993, pp.6-7)

Allison argues that the Matthean passage is sufficiently similar to the Exodus passage for us to conclude that Matthew's text is deliberately referencing Exodus and thereby drawing a deliberate link between his narrative and the Exodus narrative (Allison, 1993, p.6-7). Allison concedes that these allusions can never be identified conclusively (Allison, 1993, p.21), I am in agreement with Allison that there is no way of absolutely proving Matthean intent.

Allison goes on to offer six guidelines by which to assess, and in some cases rule out, potential allusions to the OT in Matthew (Allison, 1993, pp.21-23). I will outline these guidelines below, I will use these guidelines as a basis for assessing the validity of allusions to the OT in Matthew's text, as already noted in the previous section I will also use parts of these guidelines to assess the validity of the use of OT characters in Matthew's text.

- 1) **Whether the text alluded to is earlier than that making the allusion** – this point is not at issue concerning the use of the OT in Matthew's text.
- 2) **Whether the text alluded to is significant to the author** – The number of citations from the OT and references to named OT characters is enough evidence to confirm that the author of Matthew believed the OT to be significant. What is less certain, as discussed above, is which texts the author possessed and knew well. I have already argued that the author had access to the texts he cites and that we can assume a good knowledge of the overarching biblical narrative. What is not provable is which other OT texts he might have possessed, for this discussion I do not consider the specific question important, the text itself gives us enough evidence to assume that the Matthean author considered the OT to be significant.
- 3) **Whether the allusion clearly refers to a particular OT image rather than a more general theme. For example Allison comments that the mention of "Green Grass" in Mark 6:39 is not enough on its own to allude to Ps 23 which refers to "Green**



**Pastures”, these motifs are too common to clearly suggest a direct link.** – Assessing this point will be a significant task for this study.

- 4) **Whether the text alluded to is prominent, an allusion to an obscure passage is less likely than to a better known passage.** Allison illustrates this point by arguing that an allusion to Moses is automatically more plausible than an allusion to Ittai the Philistine commander (1Sam 15). – I will discuss allusions to Moses, the creation story, the Joseph of Genesis and to Balaam. None of these can be considered to be very obscure, although it is the case that Balaam is much less significant than Moses.
- 5) **Whether the allusion is referenced to the same purpose by more than one contemporary author.** – Of Allison’s guidelines this one is potentially problematic, in a positive sense Allison is right that the mentioning of similar allusions by contemporary authors is significant but it is hard to agree that because no other author makes a similar allusion that this signifies that this particular author does not. I will consider the question but a lack of other NT allusions does not rule out a Matthean allusion if other evidence suggests it.
- 6) **Whether the text being alluded to has distinctive elements, imagery or motifs which are highly reminiscent of a particular OT text. A NT text is more likely to be referencing an OT text if they share a detail not mentioned elsewhere in the OT, such an element assists us in focusing the allusion as being to a specific OT text rather than a generalised OT allusion. For example the inclusion of a genealogy is a general OT allusion because there are many genealogies in different parts of the OT it is impossible to attribute one OT text; however use of a specific genealogical word form only found in one OT text might be grounds for asserting a more specific allusion to a particular OT text.** – For example this is the case with the use of βίβλος γενέσεως (Matt

1:1) a phrase which is found only twice in the OT, both times in Genesis, the lack of its use elsewhere perhaps indicates a reference to these two uses in Genesis.

Allison argues that where several of the above criteria are present a credible allusion is more likely. Likewise where the same passage is alluded to multiple times in different ways then the connection is more credible.

As I discuss the allusions to the OT that Matthew's text presents in its Infancy narrative I will endeavour to assess their credibility against these criteria. As I have written elsewhere certainty as to the intentions of the Matthean author is an impossibility, my aim is to argue on basis of probability.

#### **vi. Summary of how Matthew's Text uses the OT**

In this chapter I have discussed the different ways in which Matthew's text uses the OT. There are three types of use, OT citations, mentions of OT characters or events, and OT allusions. Concerning citations I am convinced by the methodology argued by Dodd (1952) and Beale (2012 & 2014), that in Matthew's text the OT context of the citation is significant, put simply it is relevant to read the OT verse in the wider context of the passage from which it comes.

I have discussed the question of which OT texts the author of Matthew had access to, the scholarly consensus (outlined above) is that the author had access to the texts which he cites so I will follow this position while acknowledging that the author likely had an extensive oral knowledge of the OT.

Where Matthew's text mentions OT characters and events it is often less clear what is the exact reason for their inclusion. I have proposed that in many cases displacement is a part of the characters story or of the event. In the case of allusions even less certainty is possible. The main task of this study will be to assess whether these mentions of OT characters, events or OT allusions

are pertinent to the theme of displacement; prior to that task I have set out the methodology proposed by Allison as criteria by which to assess if an OT allusion is genuinely in Matthew's text.

I will now proceed in chapters three and four with the task of assessing the significance of the theme of displacement in Matthew's text.

**CHAPTER 3**  
**THE THEME OF DISPLACEMENT**  
**IN MATTHEW'S GENEALOGY**  
**MATTHEW 1:1-17**

i. **General Comments on Matthew's Genealogy**

The gospel of Matthew begins with a genealogy. In this section I will discuss in detail the first seventeen verse of the gospel, I will assess the extent to which the theme of displacement is important in the genealogy.

Genealogy is a form commonly used in Jewish Scriptures and in other books of ancient literature (Garland, 1993, p.14-15). In her book *Shall we Look For Another Wainwright* quotes concerning Matthew's genealogy an unpublished work by Yaghjian:

What a birth certificate or passport is to ours, a genealogical record was to Matthew's world: it certified the bearer as an official member of his culture in good standing, and conferred upon him the cultural credentials of role and status apposite to his ancestral heritage. (Wainwright, 1998, p.55)

For the Matthean community this genealogy gives Jesus a cultural and religious identity, a base from which all else can be built. The overarching purpose of the genealogy is to associate Jesus with the sequence of Jewish history, placing Jesus as the culmination of, and successor to, the great figures of the Jewish nation. The text makes implicit reference to several promises or covenants made with OT characters, principally David and Abraham. Matthew's text orientates these promises towards Jesus, as Kingsbury writes: "the whole of Israel's history has been so guided by God that the promises made to Abraham and to King David ... have attained their fulfilment in the coming heir of Abraham and David, namely, the Messiah." (Kingsbury, 1988, p.45). Or as Rodger writes: "In the stories relating to Jesus' birth and childhood the purpose is to show from the very beginning, even before Jesus begins his ministry, that the Gospel is speaking of the one in whom God's promises are fulfilled, the one whom the nations long for." (Rodger, 1997, p.62).

Even before analysing this genealogy in detail we can conclude that Matthew is alluding to the OT from which nearly all the characters mentioned in the genealogy are taken. Matthew locates Jesus firmly in this religious context. In his book *The New Moses* Allison argues that

throughout Matthew's Gospel the author is implicitly drawing parallels between Jesus and other figures, Allison states that it "must be reckoned a compositional habit of Matthew" (Allison, 1993, p.137). The genealogy is the first, and a particularly direct, example of this drawing of parallels. Matthew's text is presenting Jesus as a figure who falls into the succession of Jewish history, for the author of Matthew Jesus is a thoroughly Jewish figure. By including a genealogy Matthew's text is evoking, and placing itself in the tradition of, older Jewish writings all the way back to the Torah. Matthew's text is arguing, as Garland writes in his book *Reading Matthew*, that "All biblical history has been leading up to the birth of the messiah" (Garland, 1993, p.15). Wainwright expands on this idea suggesting the significance this genealogy might have had for the first readers of Matthew's text:

For those who believed that this history continued in their communities, it is a rereading of an old story, creating a new story about God's continuing participation in the lives of a people (Wainwright, 1998, p.55)

Piotrowski argues that "The genealogy is a contracted presentation – and interpretation – of Israel's long history" (Piotrowski, 2015, p.189). Piotrowski argues that the genealogy forms part of a prologue to the gospel which he suggests continues until Matt 4:11. Following Howells (Howells, 1990, p.115) Piotrowski posits that the text is educating its readers as to how to correctly interpret the remainder of the gospel. He argues that all of the events evoked up to Matt 4:11 are an interpretive key by which to read the wider gospel (Piotrowski, 2015, p.190). This is an important starting point for my discussion of the genealogy. Matthew's text is not attempting to offer a historical list of Jesus' ancestors, it is a theological text written to proclaim Jesus' identity as a Jewish leader, being a descendent of this line lends Jesus an authority.

When considering the characters of the genealogy in this study I have developed the method proposed by Allison in his fourth guideline (Allison, 1993, p.22) which I discussed above in chapter two. Allison applies this methodology to allusions but I believe it to also be applicable to the mentioning of OT characters, Allison asks whether the theme (or character in this case)

mentioned is to be considered of great importance to the author; we can posit a certain level of significance to all the characters simply by reason of them having been included, although we should not read too much into this as it is possible that some of the names are only there in order to make the genealogy coherent, in fact many of the later names do not appear anywhere in the OT. In the case of David and Abraham it is clear from the introduction to the text that they are considered significant, less certain is the significance of the other characters. I will discuss below the significance of annotations for discerning significance particularly in relation to the women. Beyond these characters the only other character whom I have considered is Hezekiah, however his inclusion in the genealogy is not my main focus he is discussed at 4a<sup>iii</sup> in relations to the citation of Isa 7:14, his inclusion in the genealogy will be noted in this discussion but is of secondary significance.

I will now turn to some of the specific features of Matthew's genealogy. Nolland argues that there is great significance in what he describes as annotations to the standard form of the genealogy, there are several of these annotations in Matthew's genealogy (Nolland, May 1996, p.117). I agree that these annotations hold significance. In my study below I have commented on a selection of these annotations including the mention of the Babylonian exile, the inclusion of female names and the claim of the author to have divided the genealogy into groups of fourteen.

Nolland continues to comment on annotations to the genealogy: "perhaps the most important of the common features to be noted is the role of the annotations in ensuring that the genealogies function as compressed tellings of the history that stands behind each" (Nolland, May 1996, p.117). On this theme Nolland concurs with the position of Piotrowski already outlined above. Hood takes up this idea arguing that the genealogy uses: "two chief compositional categories, 'annotated genealogy' and 'summary of Israel's story'." (Hood, 2011, p.62). The genealogy is a means by which Matthew's text can very quickly remind its readers of the narrative of Jewish history which is a long history made up of many OT characters and episodes. The purpose

of the annotations to the standard pattern is to refer readers to the particular significance of certain episodes in this history. The genealogy marks out in this way the characters of David and Abraham, the women, and the Babylonian exile<sup>10</sup>.

So what is the significance of the characters and episodes alluded to in the genealogy? Is the theme of displacement important? Myles suggests that a central theme of Matthew's infancy narrative is forced displacement. In the genealogy he notes that at least fifteen of the forty names experienced forced displacement; this parallels chapter 2 in which Jesus and his family twice experience forced displacement (Myles, 2013, p.37). Myles argues that "In the genealogy, the numerous intertextual echoes of episodes of forced displacement, wandering and exile within the remembered history of the Old Testament, ..., construct a marginal identity for the gospel's protagonist" (Myles, 2013, p.40).

Myles' position is consistent with the argument made in an earlier chapter that Matthew's community may have included members who had moved to a diaspora city as refugees during or after the Jewish-Roman War. As already detailed above Carter argues that Matthew's text is presenting a worldview which places Jesus at the centre human history in deliberate opposition to the Roman worldview which placed the Emperor at the centre, he writes: "Imperial theology proclaims ... that the gods have appointed Rome to rule an empire without limits" (Carter, 2001, p.60); he continues in a later work: "The Gospel's assertion in the opening genealogy that God's purpose, not Rome's, are being worked out in human history, and that those purposes run through Israel not Rome collide with these Imperial claims" (Carter, 2001, p.61). Following Myles assertion that displacement is a significant theme, and Carter's positions that the genealogy is a challenge to Roman rule, I tentatively argue that God's faithfulness to Israel through experiences of suffering, displacement and exile is a theme of the genealogy. I argue this on the basis that the Babylonian

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<sup>10</sup> There are other annotations not pertinent to this study.



exile is a prominent event, in fact the only event, in the genealogy, and on the basis that many of its characters are displaced or threatened with displacement. This focus on Babylon mirrors a focus on Egypt and Exodus in the narrative section (Matt 1:18-2:23). Taken together the infancy narrative as a whole presents displacement and both Israel and God's response to displacement as a significant theme. Furthermore the genealogy marks out the Babylonian exile as a key marker in Jewish history emphasising its significance. The text presents Jesus as a type for both the Jewish people and for the Matthean community. Jesus is a figure who is marginal and forcibly displaced by the Imperial power just as the Jewish people have been time and again, and as Matthew's community has been in recent memory. However the text argues that in the eyes of God this man, this nation and this community, are not marginal, they are rather at the centre of history; the genealogy asserts this position.

Throughout the genealogy Matthew's text uses a consistent word form for linking the generations, A δὲ ἐγέννησεν τὸν B. Brown argues that this is a standard formula in LXX OT genealogies (Brown, 1993, p.59). This is the same formula used in the LXX versions of Ruth 4:18-22 and of 1Chr 2:10-15, both of which sources Matthew uses in constructing his genealogy. I do not consider there to be any particular significance to the form of words being a mirror of Ruth and Chronicles beyond that it suggests he was familiar with these writings, and that it generally backs up the thesis that the text is seeking to place Jesus in an OT context.

Before continuing to discuss the specific details of the genealogy it is important to comment on why I am discussing the genealogy (Matt 1:1-1:17) and the narrative (Matt 1:18-2:23) separately. I am following Brown's position (Brown, 1993, pp.48-50) that both sections are Matthean and written as a whole with the rest of the gospel, there are themes which run through both sections and the rest of the gospel. However the genealogy is a distinctly different style of writing from the narrative following a different structure. The differences demand that the two sections are dealt with differently. The genealogy addresses the overarching OT story and more

directly evokes specific OT characters and one event, whereas the narrative section makes greater use of OT citations and allusions.

## ii. The Creation

Matt 1:1a: Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

The first two words of Matthew's Gospel Βίβλος γενέσεως are variously translated by scholars. Brown suggests either "Birth Record" or "Book of the Genesis" (Brown, 1993, p.58), Luz suggests "Register of the Origin" (Luz, 1989, pp.103-104), similarly Nolland translates it as "Record of the origin" (Nolland, 2005, p.65), Kingsbury renders it "Book of the origin" (Kingsbury, 1988, p.45), Grundy uses "A record of the origins" (Grundy, 1994, p.13), and the NRSV renders the words as "An account of the genealogy" (NRSV, 1989).

Scholars have disagreed as to whether these first words Βίβλος γενέσεως are meant to be a title for the genealogy which follows, the birth narrative, or perhaps even for the whole gospel (Hare, 1993, p.7). This question holds relevance for this study because the title of a work is always an important indicator of the overall theme of work. Discerning whether a title is meant for the whole gospel of just a part will help us to assess the intentions of the text.

Both Brown and Luz agree that it could be a title for the genealogy but reject that these words might be a title for the whole gospel. Brown argues that the repeating of the same word γένεσις in verse 18 marks the closing of the birth record, thus Βίβλος γενέσεως is only a title for the genealogy not the whole birth narrative or gospel (Brown, 1993, p.59). Luz goes a bit further than Brown arguing that Βίβλος γενέσεως is a title only for the first chapter of Matthew. Luz argues on the basis that although the Greek word Βίβλος is best translated by the English word "book", the word in the LXX version of Genesis from which Matthew's text quotes is a translation of a Hebrew word which better translates as "piece of writing", "document" or "register", therefore

all of these are potential translations into English of Βίβλος and so we need not assume the first words to be a title for the whole gospel (or book) (Luz, 1989, pp.103-104).

Brown, despite arguing that Βίβλος γενέσεως is a title only for the genealogy, argues that by the first century γένεσις was the accepted name for the first book of Torah among Greek-speaking Jews. Therefore, Brown argues, it is not impossible that the author of Matthew, writing for a Greek-speaking community, is seeking to evoke the book of Genesis (Brown, 1993, p.66 footnote 7). Carter similarly argues that Matt 1:1 makes reference to the creation stories (Carter, 2000 (book), pp.55-56). Luz concurs with this position in a more generalised way writing in relation to the use of Βίβλος γενέσεως that “the evangelist, at home in the Greek Bible, wants to provide with his title a loose association to the Old Testament” (Luz, 1989, pp.104).

I will now turn the questions of what Matthew’s text is attempting to communicate through the use of these opening words, and what this might have to do with the theme of displacement.

Brown, Luz and Davies & Allison all propose that Matthew’s text is making a reference to the LXX version of Gen 2:4 and Gen 5:1 (Brown, 1993, p.66 / Luz, 1989, pp.103 / Davies & Allison, 1988, p.150). In both cases the exact same formulation is used βίβλος γενέσεως. Brown also suggests Gen 6:9a as a reference (Brown, 1993, p.66) where the wording is slightly different Αὗται δὲ αἱ γενέσεις. Davies and Allison challenge Brown’s third suggestion of Gen 6:9a arguing that Αὗται δὲ αἱ γενέσεις is the more typical OT way of introducing a genealogy, they argue, it is of note that the text does not use this common word form instead choosing to use the less common βίβλος γενέσεως only found in LXX in Gen 2:4 and Gen 5:1 (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.150). Such a detail seems to confirm that Matthew’s text is directly referring to Gen 2:4 and Gen 5:1 particularly, and not simply to the idea of biblical genealogy in a general sense.

Having argued that Matthew’s text is drawing a parallel between Jesus and both Gen 2:4 and 5:1, I will now consider the reasons for making this link.

Gen 2:4a reads:

Αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς (LXX)  
βίβλος γενέσεως of the heavens and the earth (my translation)

This verse falls on the bridge between what we now refer to as the first and second creation stories<sup>11</sup>, Davies in his 1964 study suggests a parallel between the two creation stories of Gen 1-2, and the two parts of Matthew's infancy narrative 1:1-17 and 1:18-25. Davies argues that the text is very subtly drawing this link between the creation and the birth of Jesus (Davies, 1964, pp.71-72).

Evoking Gen 5:1 suggests a similar parallel; this verse introduces the genealogy of the first human beings, the descendants of Adam. The genealogy which commences at Gen 5:1a begins:

Αὕτη ἡ βίβλος γενέσεως ἀνθρώπων (LXX)  
βίβλος γενέσεως of men/humanity (my translation)

This text highlights the origins of humanity; the reference to it in Matthew's text suggests that the text proposes a link between Jesus and the new creation of humanity.

If we take the three texts in sequence we can discern that Matthew's text is following a pattern:

Gen 2:4a – Stage 1	βίβλος γενέσεως οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς	βίβλος γενέσεως of heaven and earth
Gen 5:1a – Stage 2	βίβλος γενέσεως ἀνθρώπων	βίβλος γενέσεως of men/humanity
Matt 1:1a – Stage 3	Βίβλος γενέσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ	Βίβλος γενέσεως of Jesus Christ

The fact that the Gen 2:4a and Gen 5:1a are the only uses of βίβλος γενέσεως in the OT suggests that this pattern is intentional. Before moving into a genealogy which will begin with Abraham, the gospel subtly alludes to an even earlier origin presenting Jesus as the next stage in

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<sup>11</sup> Of course for the writer of Matthew no such literary distinction would have been made. Whatever might be the analysis of today's Hebrew scholars as to whether this sits with the first or second creation narrative is unimportant to this study, Matthew's community would have read the narrative as one piece, these words falling right at the centre of the one continuous creation story.

this ongoing creation. God first created the heavens and the earth; then he created men/humanity; now he is taking his creative work into a third stage through Jesus Christ.

This proposed threefold sequence of creation does not speak directly to the theme of displacement. However it does set up a sequence of God's creation which as Matthew's text continues we will see is disrupted in a variety of ways. The genealogy bears witness that the divine plan continues through the generations despite being disrupted. The genealogy proclaims a message of God's faithfulness to Israel through times of displacement. For a community experiencing displacement there is the possibility of new beginning.

The question which must be considered is whether the use of βίβλος γενέσεως can be considered credible as an allusion to Gen 2:4a and 5:1a, and therefore whether my three stage outlined above are a credible suggestion when judged against Allison's guidelines as outlined in 2v (Allison, 1993, pp.21-23)? As already stated above Allison's first two criteria are not at issue, Genesis was written earlier than Matthew and the Matthean author would have considered Genesis to be a significant text. Likewise in this example Allison's fourth criterion that the passage cited be prominent is also not at issue, nor is the fifth criterion as to whether the text is quoted by other contemporary authors. The key area of consideration falls on Allison's third and sixth criteria, I will take these in turn. The third criterion asks if the allusion can be accurately attributed to a specific text or if the details are too generalised. Is too much being made of a small detail? It is on this point that my discussion above comes under scrutiny, Matthew's text does not explicitly mention the creation, the suggestion of a link is based on scant evidence, much relies on the use of the word γενέσεως. Allison's sixth criterion asks if the text being alluded to has distinctive elements, unusual imagery or uncommon motifs which connect it to a specific OT text (Allison, 1993, p.23). As noted above Gen 2:4a and Gen 5:1a are the only OT uses of βίβλος γενέσεως, this detail suggests a reminiscence but the question of whether it can be considered "highly" is not at all clear, this would assume the reader to have a significant level of detailed biblical knowledge, I

am sceptical that this would be the case. However whatever might be the case in regard to the reader it is possible that the allusion has still been placed here by the author consciously, it is unlikely that the Matthean author would know that this phrase is only found twice in the OT but this detail does evoke the OT, and the fact that it is only used twice is an aid to us in discerning from where in the OT this allusion is taken. Allison's sixth criterion asks as to the frequency of similar allusions elsewhere in Matthew's gospel. Matt 1:1 is the only use of βίβλος γενέσεως in the NT so the possible allusion fails to satisfy this criterion. On balance Allison's guidelines are partially met, it cannot be concluded conclusively that the use of βίβλος γενέσεως is an allusion to Genesis however neither can the allusion be ruled out conclusively.

### iii. The Exile

Various scholars have commented on the inclusion of the Babylonian exile in Matthew's genealogy. Wright argues that the exile was a problem which finds a solution in Jesus' birth and therefore God's promises to Abraham and David can find fulfilment (Wright, 1992, pp.385-386). Likewise Kingsbury argues that God's promises which had "come to naught" in the exile "have attained their fulfilment in the coming of the heir of Abraham and David" (Kingsbury, 1988, p.44). Similar arguments are put forward by Davies & Allison (1988, pp.187-188), and France (1985, pp.29-30). A different approach is taken by Davis and by Nolland, these scholars attach no significance to the mention of the exile beyond being a date marker (Davis, 1973, pp.523-524; Nolland, 2005, p.84). For Kingsbury, Davies & Allison and France the exile was a problem which is now solved and Israel can now return to the promises made to Abraham and David; for Davis and for Nolland the exile in Babylon is merely a footnote in the history of Israel; the exile is mentioned because it is too significant an event not to mention. Of the scholars listed above it is Wright for whom the theme of exile is most significant, he argues that most first century Jews would have considered themselves to still be in exile, the physical geographical return had not been a return

to the pre-exile covenant, nor to political self rule (Wright, 1992, pp.268-279). According to Wright's reading of Matthew, Jesus's birth heralds a way out of exile; the problem of exile is in the process of being solved (Wright, 1992, pp.385-386).

In this section I will be arguing that the Babylonian exile is of significance in the genealogy. Piotrowski makes a case that the exile is the most significant OT event mentioned in Matthew's genealogy reasoning on the basis that it is in fact the only OT event directly mentioned, although there are many other OT events to which the text alludes (Piotrowski, 2015, pp.193-194).

I will discuss in the next section of this work how the genealogy is seeking to draw a link between Jesus and the OT characters Abraham and David. Both Bauer and Davies & Allison note in relation to Abraham and David that there exists a chiasmus in the text:

A Jesus Christ (1:1b)  
           B David (1:1c)  
               C Abraham (1:1d)  
               C' Abraham (1:2)  
           B' David (1:6)  
       A' Jesus Christ (1:16)

(Bauer, 1996, p.143/2 / Davies & Allison, 1988, p.149)

Alongside the chiasm outlined above Hagner notes a very similar inclusio structure, verse one mirrors verse 17 (Hagner, 1993, p.5):

A. Jesus  
   B. David  
   C. Abraham       *Mattt 1:1*

[Matt 1:2-16]

C'. Abraham  
   B'. David  
   A'. Jesus         *Matt 1:17*

For Bauer, Davies & Allison and Hagner, the central meaning of the genealogy is the association of Jesus with Abraham and David, the Babylonian exile is passed over very briefly in their studies.

Piotrowski however, drawing on the work of Bauer, Davies & Allison and Hagner, puts much greater emphasis on the exile, he notes a detail which these scholars fail to observe which is that these structures are in fact interrupted.

A Jesus Christ (1:1b)  
           B David (1:1c)  
             C Abraham (1:1d)  
             C' Abraham (1:2)  
           B' David (1:6)  
             **D. Deportation to Babylon (1:11-12)**  
           A' Jesus Christ (1:16)

(Piotrowski, 2015, p.193, **my bold**)

As with the Chiasmus so with the inclusio structure:

A. Jesus	
B. David	
C. Abraham	<i>Matt 1:1</i>
[Matt 1:2-16]	
C'. Abraham	
B'. David	
<b>D. Deportation to Babylon</b>	
A'. Jesus	<i>Matt 1:17</i>

(Piotrowski, 2015, p.193, **my bold**)

Above in chapter two I noted Nolland's argument that the interruptions to the genealogy are significant (Nolland, May 1996, p.117), following Nolland I consider that the interruption of the Babylonian exile is significant. I agree with Piotrowski who argues that the exile takes us by surprise in the text because the chiastic and inclusio structures sets us up to expect a particular structure and then interrupts this structure (Piotrowski, 2015, p.194).

A second argument proposed by Piotrowski as to the significance of the exile for Matthew's genealogy is based on the use of the word μετοικεσίᾳς at Matt 1:12, Piotrowski argues that this word has no exact meaning, it can be used to mean the event of expulsion, the region being evacuated, the longer experience of exile or as an adjective to describe someone who is an



exile. Therefore it is necessary to make use of the textual context to assess what μετοικεσίας means in the genealogy. Piotrowski argues that the preposition Μετά (after) used at the beginning of verse twelve is the significant guide for our understanding. The use of Μετά followed by μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλῶνος suggests that at the point at which the series of begetting resumes the μετοικεσίας is complete rather than ongoing. However according to the biblical narrative the return from exile was lead by Zerubbabel seventy years later, both Salathiel and Zerubbabel (v.12) must have been born while in exile in Babylon before the return from exile. On this basis Piotrowski argues that μετοικεσίας should be understood as being the event of deportation, the beginning of the exile rather than the full period of exile, (Piotrowski, 2015, p.194). if Μετά δὲ τὴν μετοικεσίαν Βαβυλῶνος meant after the complete seventy years of exile then logically this phrase would not be included in the text until verse 13 before the birth of either Abiud or Eliakim whichever was the first to be born after the return. It is significant that the text does not in any way note the moment of return. On this basis Piotrowski argues that for the genealogy, and for Matthew's gospel generally, the period of the exile did not end with the return to ancient lands of Judah and Israel. The exile continues up until the beginning of Jesus' reign as the Davidic king (Piotrowski, 2015, p.198). As with verse twelve similarly verse seventeen does not mention a return from exile in its summary of the genealogy, Piotrowski writes:

The reader perceives that, in Matthew's narrative world, *the last major event of Israel's history before the birth of Christ is the deportation to Babylon.*

(Piotrowski, 2015, p.198, in italics citing Kennedy, 2008, p.78)

The time period between the deportation and Jesus is of little importance.

The position outlined above concurs with that of those scholars mentioned at the beginning of this section (Wright, 1992, pp.385-386; Kingsbury, 1988, p.44) who see the birth of Jesus as the end of a period of exile. Davies & Allison write rhetorically on this subject:

Is not the reader to infer that the kingdom that was inaugurated with David and lost at the captivity is restored with the coming of Jesus, the Davidic

Messiah? In other words, does not the structure of the genealogy mean that the advent of the Messiah marks the beginning of the eschatological restoration of Israel's kingdom?

(Davies & Allison, 1988, p.180)

Waetjen defines the period of exile as the time in which Israel was without a Davidic king (Waetjen, 1976, p.209), the exile does not end until this royal line is restored. Some scholars follow a similar line of thinking but do not judge the end moment of exile to be Jesus' birth. Jesus' ascent to the throne of David and his bringing to an end the period of exile is a more complex theme in Matthew's gospel, it can be argued that the bringing about of the end of exile is not automatic but a process which Jesus is involved in throughout the gospel, Charette notes that there is no end of exile imagery throughout the gospel (Charette, 1992, pp.291-295); however this difference in details is not of great importance for this discussion, the theme of Jesus' life marking the end of exile is the central concern. Piotrowski summarises this wider position noting that the text signifies that the end of exile is in view rather than has actually arrived:

The third era [of the genealogy] can be defined, therefore, as the unending exile when there is no Davidic king. With Jesus the Christ, therefore, the end of the exile is now in view insofar as he is the rightful Davidic heir, the one who will finally reverse the theologically tragic μετοικεσία as well as its ongoing effects.

(Piotrowski, 2015, p.198)

In summary the text sets up its readers to understand that the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham and David is found in Jesus. However the structure of the text highlights that this series of begetting is interrupted by the exile, an exile which continues until these promises can be restored with Jesus.

#### **iv. David and Abraham**

Matt 1:1c: υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ υἱοῦ Ἀβραάμ.

With these four words Matthew associates Jesus with both David and Abraham, the genealogy is structured around four points in Jewish history, Abraham, David, the Babylonian exile and the birth

of Jesus. Garland writes in relation to Abraham and David's inclusion that "Matthew links Jesus to God's two great promises to Israel" (Garland, 1993, p.15). Matthew is presenting Jesus as one who is part of Jewish history, the text is arguing that the promises made to David and Abraham are applicable to Jesus.

As already noted above both Bauer and Davies & Allison note that the structure of the opening verse forms a chiasmus with the following genealogy (Bauer, 1996, p.143/2 / Davies & Allison, 1988, p.149).

A Jesus Christ (1:1b)  
           B David (1:1c)  
               C Abraham (1:1d)  
               C' Abraham (1:2)  
           B' David (1:6)  
       A' Jesus Christ (1:16)

I noted above in 3iv) that this chiasmus is interrupted by the exile (Piotrowski, 2015, p.193), neither Bauer nor Davies & Allison mention this interruption.

Davies and Allison argue that the title υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ "comes close to being Matthew's most characteristic appellation for the earthly Jesus",<sup>12</sup> being used nine times in the gospel (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.156-7)<sup>13</sup>. By the first century υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ was a standard messianic title used by Rabbis, "by the time of Jesus, the dominant, although not exclusive, Jewish expectation ... was that the messianic king would be a son of David" (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.156). As with the title Χριστός, to name Jesus as the son of David was to make a messianic claim, to legitimate Jesus as a

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<sup>12</sup> It should be noted that Davies & Allison clarify their position by stating that most characteristic does not mean most important (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.156-7).

<sup>13</sup> Uses of the title "son of David" for Jesus in Matthew's gospel

Matt 1:1	Introduction to the genealogy
Matt 9:27	Two blind men use the title son of David when asking for mercy
Matt 12:23	The crowd question if Jesus could be the son of David after he exorcises a demon from a man who is blind and mute
Matt 15:22	A Canaanite woman addresses Jesus as son of David when asking for a demon to be cast out of her daughter.
Matt 20:30,31	Two blind men use the title son of David when asking for mercy
Matt 21:9,15	The crowds in Jerusalem shout as Jesus enters the city "Hosanna to the Son of David!"

(Source: Davies & Allison, 1988, p.157)

king figure, one who in the Jewish milieu has a more legitimate right to rule than either Rome or the Hasmonean or Herodic dynasties.

In this study my task is to assess the extent to which the theme of displacement is significant. I will discuss this question in two ways. I will establish that both David and Abraham are significant as marginal characters who by means of a divine promise are brought to significance in the OT narrative, this initial marginality is both social and physical. Secondly I will establish that the ascendancy of both David and Abraham in OT tradition associated with a blessed period after a more turbulent time, in particular David's rule is presented by biblical tradition as a high point for Israel. During more difficult periods in OT history, writers look backwards remembering this better time, and forwards in hope of a future Davidic ruler. For a displaced Matthean community to present Jesus as the son of David is to herald the end of a period of displacement and the return of such a high point.

#### **a) Abraham and David as Marginal Characters**

To argue that Abraham and David are presented as marginal characters is to an extent disingenuous. Alongside Moses they are two of the most celebrated figures of the OT. However in the context of a study of the theme of displacement it is relevant to note that the biblical stories of both men begin with them living in obscurity. Later tradition celebrates both figures but it is important to note that both achieve greatness by obedience to God, neither begins life in a context of greatness. I am not arguing that these characters are marginal in the OT rather that their stories begin from a marginal position.

Abraham is called by God while living in the land of Haran (Gen 12:4), following his call from God Abraham continues to live a marginal existence as a seemingly independent man, not part of any kingdom. His ascent to greatness is the result of answering the call of God and receiving promises from God. The author of Matthew would have been aware of this narrative context.

David is the eighth son of Jesse, in the story of David's anointing as King we are given no information about Jesse's social status (1Sam 16:10-11), like Abraham the emphasis seems to be on the initiative of God who chooses David as King. The story of David is a narrative of one under obedience to God. Obedience is rewarded, disobedience is punished. The theme of displacement is hinted at later in the David narrative, in the episode of David's son Absalom seizing the throne (2Sam 15:1-19:8) which dominates the later story of David. In this story David is forced to flee from his son, then is later restored to the throne. Schniedewind argues that during the exile in Babylon the exiled King Jehoiachin ran a court in exile and that it was at this court that many Jewish religious texts were written, and where older texts were edited and reworked (Schniedewind, 2004, pp.147-164). Following Schniedewind we can posit that the episode of David's usurpation by Absalom and then return is a story inflected with the experience of King Jehoiachin, an exiled king of an exiled nation, Jehoiachin's court is writing the story of David as a mirror to the experience of their own king who they hope will one day return from exile.

To what extent is Matthew's text consciously evoking this marginal image of David and Abraham? In Matthew's Passion there are several allusions to Davidic psalms which speak of lament in a time of suffering<sup>14</sup> and allusions to the story of the attempted overthrow of David in

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<sup>14</sup> Matthew follows Mark in referring to several psalms in his passion narrative. I have outlined these below following the work of Ahearne-Kroll on Mark's Gospel (Ahearne-Kroll, 2007, p.167), the references from Matthew are my own.

<b><u>Psalm</u></b>	<b><u>Mark</u></b>	<b><u>Matthew</u></b>
Ps 39(40):10	Mark 14:18	Matt 26:21
Ps 40(41):6	Mark 14:34	Matt 26:38
Ps 40(41):12	Mark 14:34	Matt 26:38
Ps 41(42):5	Mark 14:34	Matt 26:38
Ps 68(69):22	Mark 15:23	Matt 27:34
Ps 21(22):19	Mark 15:24	Matt 27:35
Ps 21(22):8	Mark 15:29	Matt 27:39-40
Ps 21(22):2	Mark 15:34	Matt 27:46
Ps 68:22	Mark 15:36	Matt 27:48-49

2Sam 15-18 (Ahearne-Kroll, 2007, p.167)<sup>15</sup>. These words merit fuller study elsewhere, here it is must suffice to note that these texts are of lament in times of suffering. Ahearne-Kroll argues that what he describes as the Davidic Passion is a model for Mark's passion (Ahearne-Kroll, 2007, p.167) from which Matthew takes his own narrative. This conscious evoking of David's suffering and exile in the Marcan tradition opens up the possibility that the author of Matthew is consciously evoking an image of David as a suffering exiled king. As argued above υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ is a significant title for Jesus in Matthew's Gospel particularly in the infancy narrative. It seems likely that the text is paralleling Jesus with David's life throughout the gospel, both begin their life in obscurity, both are subject to a divine promise, both experience suffering, betrayal and rejection at the end of their life. At first sight the association of Jesus with David in Matt 1:1 might be assumed to be a presentation of Jesus as a great king, one who might powerfully lead Israel. The introduction of Jesus as Χριστὸς and as υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ sets us up to consider Jesus as a king in the image of David, however as the gospel continues the readers initial expectations of what this kingship means are challenged; I have noted above the humble origins of David and the anguish of the Absalom narrative, the gospel author is perhaps seeking to evoke a more humble and vulnerable form of Davidic kingship.

#### **b) Abraham and David as heralds of the end of exile**

Brown, Garland and Davies & Allison all argue that Matthew's text is drawing a clear link between Jesus and the promise made by God to David in 2Sam 7:8-16 (Brown, 1977, p.68<sup>16</sup> / Garland, 1993, p.15 / Davies & Allison, 1988, p.156). David was promised "your throne shall be established

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<sup>15</sup> Although Ahearne-Kroll's work is principally about Mark's, I have used this source because the passages which he parallels between Mark and 2Sam are also used by Matthew. Ahearne-Kroll writes: "Jesus ascends the Mount of Olives weeping and praying in Gethsemane (Mark 14:26-33; *Matt 26:30-45*), as does David in 2Sam 15:30-1. Peter swears his loyalty to Jesus even if it means death (Mark 14:27-31; *Matt 26:33-35*), as Ittai does to David in 2Sam 15:19-24. Jesus is betrayed by a trusted follower, Judas (Mark 14:43-50; *Matt 26:47-56*), as is David by Ahithophel in 2Sam 17:23" (Ahearne-Kroll, 2007, p.167) – *References from Matthew are mine added in italics.*

<sup>16</sup> Although Brown mentions the promise to David he does not cite 2Sam.

forever” (2Sam 7:16b NRSV). Luz concurs with this position indirectly arguing that to be the son of David meant to be the Messiah of Israel from royal blood (Luz, 1989, pp.104). Davies and Allison propose that “Matthew’s opening two chapters are intended to demonstrate that Jesus ... qualifies as the royal Messiah, the Davidic king” (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.157). Horsley argues that such a claim holds clear political as well as religious connotations (Horsley, 1989, pp.30-31). Novakovic challenges the consensus that υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ was an established messianic title, offering an analysis of the title υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ in contemporary Jewish thought, she argues that there was a diversity of expectations (Novakovic, 1997, p.150-151).<sup>17</sup> The title υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ is loaded with significance, by using this title for Jesus, Matthew is seeking to communicate to his readers, in the midst of a complicated political milieu, that it is in Jesus that this covenant made with David will be brought to reality, ultimate power does not rest with the current temporal rulers.

As with David, Abraham was the recipient of, or partner in, several covenantal statements made by God. Brown, Grundy, and Davies & Allison, comment that in both Gen 12:3 and Gen 18:18 Abraham receives promises relating to the gentile world (Grundy, 1994, p.13; Davies & Allison, 1988, p.158). Brown writes: “Jesus is heir to the promises made to David and kept alive in Judaism; he is also heir to the wider promise of blessings to the gentiles made through Abraham” (Brown, 1977, p.68). Abraham is told by God that “in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed” (Gen 12:3b NRSV) and later God states that “all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him” (Gen 18:18b NRSV). Matthew’s text links Jesus to these promises presenting them as coming to view in the events of Jesus’ life. Grundy concurs with Brown, and also suggests Genesis 22:18 (Grundy, 1994, p.13) which reads “by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves” (Gen 22:18a NRSV). More so than in the previous references from Genesis I believe

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<sup>17</sup> Novakovic further argues that the title ‘Son of David’ came to prominence as a messianic title only in the century leading up to Jesus’ adult life; she writes that the only pre-Christian mention of the messianic title “son of David” is in the Psalm of Solomon probably written in 63 BCE after Pompeius conquered Jerusalem, she argues that it likely expresses hopes for a new ruler in the face of disappointment with the Hasmonean dynasty (Novakovic, 1997, p.150-151).

that this last text is the most pertinent to the purpose of Matthew's text, the main concern is not Abraham himself so much as Jesus as one of Abraham's offspring, by Jesus will all nations be blessed. For Matthew's text it is likely that the title 'son of Abraham' is intended to have a double sense, that of giving Jesus a Jewish identity and of presenting him as a blessing to all nations and thereby including the gentile members of Matthew's community in this ancient covenant. Garland agrees with this position noting that another NT author, Paul, makes a similar connection in Gal 3:5 (Garland, 1993, p.16).

Both David and Abraham are presented by the OT tradition as ideal leaders. Men whose time is looked back on as a golden age. To present Jesus as one like David or Abraham is to evoke the return of such a golden era that in Jesus the present time of displacement will end.

#### **v. The Women**

I will begin by returning to Hood's argument, noted above, that Matthew's genealogy is an 'annotated genealogy' (Hood, 2011, p.62); and both Hood and Nolland's argument that the genealogy functions as compressed tellings of Jewish history (Nolland, May 1996, p.117). Some of the most notable annotations to the genealogy are the inclusion of women. OT genealogies are always male constructions, the line of father to son or son to father is of principle importance. It is rare but not unknown for women to be mentioned in genealogies; Schaberg in *The Illegitimacy of Jesus* suggests that women are only mentioned in OT genealogies when there is an irregularity of descent or if the woman's name holds significance (Schaberg, 1995, p.207, footnote 1). In LXX 1 Chr 2:4 Tamar is mentioned, and in 1Chr 2:16 David's sisters and their sons, in Gen 11:27-30 the wives of Abram and Nahor are mentioned. However these mentions of women are rare exceptions to dominantly male lists.



Five women are mentioned in Matthew's genealogy, Tamar (v.3), Rahab (v.5)<sup>18</sup>, Ruth (v.5), the wife of Uriah (v.6) and Mary. For Grundy it is notable that there is no mention in the genealogy of some of the more celebrated mothers of Jewish tradition, Sarah, Rebekah, Leah or Rachel (Grundy, 1994, p.15). Rahab's inclusion in the genealogy as the wife of Salmon (v.5) seems to be a completely Matthean creation nowhere in the OT is she mentioned to be the wife of Salmon (Brown, 1993, p.60)<sup>19</sup>.

Brown offers three possible reasons for the inclusion of the women which are 1) that they are sinners, 2) that they are foreigners, and 3) that their marriages were irregular in some way (Brown, 1993, pp.71-74). I will not engage in a detailed discussion of these reasons here because it would take me too far away from my theme of displacement. I will focus my discussion on Brown's second proposal, Brown proposes that (if we leave Mary to one side) the common link which unites the four OT women is that they were all born as gentiles (Brown, 1993, pp.72-73). Tamar is not specifically mentioned as a gentile but she is introduced while her father-in-law Judah is living among gentiles (Gen 38:1-6), Rahab was a resident of Jericho when Joshua laid siege to the city (Josh 2:1) and Ruth was a Moabite woman (Ruth 1:4). The mention of Bathsheba, however, does not fit this pattern, but for Brown the way in which she is presented by Matthew's text is the clearest indication that this theme is intended. Bathsheba is not named, rather she is referred to as 'the wife of Uriah' (Matt 1:6b NRSV) (Brown, 1993, p.72). Uriah is mentioned multiple times in 2 Samuel as being a Hittite; Bathsheba by contrast is named as being the daughter of Eliam (2Sam 11:3), Hood notes that her father's hebrew name almost certainly denotes him, and by extension her, as an Israelite (Hood, 2011, pp.107-108). Matthew's text overcomes this hindrance to its

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<sup>18</sup> It is generally assumed that Matthew refers to the Rahab mentioned first in Josh ch.2. Brown argues that "it is virtually certain that Matthew means the Rahab of the conquest." (Brown, 1993, p.60)

<sup>19</sup> Brown, Davies and Allison, and Schaberg, all argue that OT genealogies suggest they were separated by almost two-hundred years (Brown, 1993, p.60; Davies & Allison, 1988, p.173; Schaberg, 1995, p.25).

presentation of foreign women by introducing Bathsheba into the genealogy as the wife of Uriah, the text seeks to present her to its readers as if a gentile by using her husband's name. Grundy notes that Matthew's text does not even include the word wife in his text ἐκ τῆς τοῦ Οὐρίου literally reading as 'out of the ... of Uriah' (*my translation*) or as 'by the one of Uriah' (*translation of Anderson* (Anderson, 2001, p.31)), This odd phraseology seems to place the emphasis on Uriah, one who is known to be a gentile. Grundy argues that Matthew's text has adapted the form used in LXX 1Sam 11:26 ἡ γυνὴ Οὐρίου (the wife of Uriah (*my translation*)) so as to place the emphasis on Uriah himself, Grundy argues from this detail that "the genealogy foreshadows the place of Gentiles in the church" (Grundy, 1994, p.15). Hood also argues that the intention of Matthew's text is to highlight Uriah as a righteous gentile rather than Bathsheba (Hood, 2011, pp.127-137).

Davies and Allison suggest that the inclusion of these four gentile women makes a good companion with the subsequent story of the gentile Magi who worship Jesus (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.171). The acceptance and inclusion of Gentiles is also a theme which appears later in Matthew's gospel<sup>20</sup>.

Sim argues against the gentile origins of the women being significant on the basis that they were viewed by later tradition as converts to Judaism (Sim, 1998, p.219), contrary to Sim I believe that this conversion is of significance, if the Matthean community was Jewish but open to converts then the inclusion of these four women becomes a symbol of gentiles joining the Matthean Jewish-Christian community.

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<sup>20</sup> Two demoniacs are exorcised in Gentile territory (8:28-34), a Canaanite woman's faith is praised by Jesus (15:21-28) and Jesus feeds 4'000 men in a gentile region (15:32-39). The last two of these episodes particularly are examples of Jesus bringing outsiders into Judaism, in the story of the Canaanite woman Matthew's text quotes Jesus as saying "'I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel". But she came and knelt before him saying "Lord, help me"' (Matt 15:24-25 NRSV), it seems clear that Matthew's text is proposing a new inclusivity which is challenging, so much so that the text even presents Jesus as being challenged by this vision. Similarly Garland notes that Ruth's inclusion in a Jewish genealogy is in conflict with the instructions of Moses in Deuteronomy that "No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted to the assembly of the Lord" (Deut 23:3a NRSV) (Garland, 1993, p.17-18). In this detail we can perhaps deduce that Matthew's Jesus is challenging exclusivist interpretations of the Jewish law.

The inclusion of Gentiles implies interaction with gentiles, this would be have been an inevitable consequence of displacement. So we can also perhaps infer the diaspora experience of the Matthean community from this detail.

In relation to my overall theme, discussing whether displacement is an important theme for the text, it is significant that in the insertion of these OT women Matthew's text has chosen to give Jesus foreign ancestors. Such an understanding proclaims a message of inclusivity towards gentiles, that God will find a way to include outsiders in Israel; this message would have been powerful in a context of displacement where subsequently gentiles may have become part of the Matthean community. It would also have been powerful for those who had been displaced, the stories of the women give hope that even in a context of displacement new life is possible.

The theme of displacement is clearest in relation to the inclusion of Ruth and Rahab. Ruth was a Moabite who was displaced from Moab to Judah, earlier in the Ruth narrative Naomi is displaced to Moab by famine where one of her sons marries Ruth. Naomi's return to Judah (with Ruth) later in the story seems to be partly a matter of choice, but the narrative does mention the presence of food in Judah (Ruth 1:6). Ruth is displaced to Judah where she comes to be accepted and in time marries Boaz. Ruth's narrative tells the story of a displacement which comes to good, albeit one which operates in the opposite direction to the Matthean community, into Israel not out of Israel; the narrative of Naomi offers hope, after having been displaced by famine for ten years Naomi is able to return, the narrative of Ruth ends with Ruth's child Obed being claimed by Naomi (Ruth 4:17). There is a message of hope for those who have been displaced. Rahab was a prostitute in Jericho (Josh 2:1-21,6:22-25), she is displaced when the Israelites destroy the city of Jericho, but because she had helped the Hebrew spies she is spared and her family is incorporated into Israel. As with Ruth this is a narrative of inclusion, a displaced gentile is brought into Israel. Rahab is also a victim of war, like some of the Matthean community she has been forced to flee

her home because of conflict, that such an experience of forced displacement could be turned to a story of hope would likely have been a source of hope.

**vi. Summary and conclusions on the theme of displacement in Matthew's genealogy**

The overarching purpose of including a genealogy is to connect Jesus to Jewish history, we can conclude that Matthew's text wishes to make this link. I have followed Nolland (May 1996, p.117) and Hood (2011, p.62) in arguing that annotations to the standard form of the text are of significance; and I have followed Myles (2013, p.40) in arguing that displacement is a significant theme in the genealogy.

The genealogy includes several themes which relate either directly or indirectly to displacement. The Babylonian exile is a key marker for the text and is in fact the only event mentioned, the connection between this event and displacement is self-evident. I have commented on how the structure of Matthew's text is interrupted by the exile, a theme which would have mirrored the displacement experience of the Matthean community. It would have been reassuring to this community to note that Israel's history continued beyond exile. All four of the women mentioned (excepting Mary) are of gentile origin or are introduced by Matthew's text in terms of a gentile identity. The stories of Rahab and of Ruth involve displacement and subsequent inclusion into Israel, this details could have been meaningful to a diaspora community who were recently displaced, albeit that the Matthean community had been displaced out of Judea whereas the genealogy's women were displaced into Israel. David and Abraham are mentioned evoking the promises made to them which relate to gentiles. I have argued that in the text we can discern allusions to creation thereby evoking the idea of a new creation, while this detail does not directly link to displacement it does add further evidence to the argument that Israel can begin again in a context of displacement. Both David and Abraham are characters who begin their stories in obscurity at the margins of their society and were brought to prominence through the actions of

God, both men prefigure Jesus as a figure who will lead Israel into new covenant relationships with God.

Through many of these OT references the theme of displacement is present, it is a key factor in many of the stories which are evoked by Matthew's text, however it is less clear that evoking the theme of displacement is a significant reason why the Matthean author makes these references. In the case of David and Abraham the continued covenant between God and Israel is significant, we can posit that in a context of displacement there might have been doubt that these covenants still hold, so I suggest that Matthew's text is a restating of these promises of God. Likewise Matthew's text is keen to highlight the inclusion of OT gentiles into Israel, the presence of gentiles is often a consequence of displacement. My sense is that it was not the Matthean author's principal intention to write a genealogy which comments on displacement, rather it was an inevitable consequence of his situation that this theme would be part of his text, and so it is legitimate to recognise this theme in the text.

In conclusion I have presented an argument that displacement is a significant theme in the genealogy, however not that it is necessarily the only theme or the principal theme. God's faithfulness remains central, this faithfulness has continued despite numerous experiences of displacement. Also of significance is the inclusion of gentiles.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**THE THEME OF DISPLACEMENT**  
**IN MATTHEW'S INFANCY NARRATIVE**  
**MATTHEW 1:18-2:23**

a) **USE OF OT CITATIONS**

In this study my task is to assess the extent to which Matthew's infancy narrative uses the OT to evoke the theme of displacement. The clearest use of the OT in the text is the use of five formula citations, four of which the text introduces as being fulfilled by the events narrated, I will discuss these citations below arguing that these citations are significant to the theme of displacement.

i. **Some general comments on the formula citations in Matthew's Infancy Narrative**

In the narrative section of the Infancy narrative (1:18-2:23) Matthew's text seem to quote directly from the OT five times (1:23; 2:6; 2:15; 2:18; 2:23), four of these citations are directly attributable to specific OT verses albeit that there is debate as to which version of this OT is being cited, for the fifth citation at Matt 2:23 it is harder to identify a specific OT source.

Brown discusses in depth whether these citations originate with Matthew's text or from a pre-Matthean source rightly pointing out that the answer to this question is pertinent to whether we can consider these citations to be relevant to the wider purpose of Matthew's text or not, if the citations are Matthean then we can draw direct conclusions as to the purpose of their use, if the citations come from a pre-Matthean source or a post-Matthean edit then they are of less importance for determining their purpose for the author of Matthew. Brown argues that they are Matthean arguing that: "they served some of his own particular theological and pastoral interests" (Brown, 1993, p.104). I will continue following Brown's position in this regard. Earlier in this study I argued with Brown that the Infancy narrative is not an addition to the wider text of Matthew's Gospel, that argument holds here.

Reflecting on the formula citation from Isa 7:14, Brown rules out that the writer of Isa 7 was in some way predicting Jesus' birth, Brown argues that the interpretation of Isa 7:14 as a prophecy of Jesus' birth was developed by the Christian community; Brown writes that the "conception of prophecy as prediction of the distant future has disappeared from most serious scholarship today" (Brown, 1993, p.146). I agree with Brown vis-à-vis the distinction between

modern scholarship of Isaiah and the reading of Isaiah in Matthew's text. However I think it is important to discuss how Matthew's text understands Isa 7, be that understanding near or far from modern readings of Isaiah. Whatever opinion modern scholars might take as to the validity of the reading of Isaiah in Matthew this interpretation remains my focus. This same methodology will be applied to the other citations. Matthew's text gives us an interpretation of the OT which is Matthean, there is no obviousness about what the OT texts mean.

In the case of four of the citations Matthew's text introduces the cited text as fulfilling a prophecy (1:22-23; 2:15; 2:17-18; 2:23). Brown's position is that: "For Matthew, these citations did more than highlight incidental agreements between the OT and Jesus. He introduced them because they fit his general theology of the oneness of God's plan" (Brown, 1993, p.104). Similarly Kupp suggests that Matthew's use of these citations is an indication that "with Jesus the age of prophecy has become the age of fulfilment" (Kupp, 1996, p.54). Matthew's text claims that the events of Jesus' early life are in some way a fulfilment of these prophecies. This is the Matthean reading of the OT texts cited. Barton points out that whatever we may believe concerning what OT prophets thought they were predicting, the early Christians did interpret passages from the OT as having predicted events in the life of Jesus, even if they accepted that the prophet himself was unaware of what was being predicted, Barton writes: "To say that the [early Christian] community saw the text of prophetic books as pregnant with hidden meanings is a considerable understatement" (Barton, 1986, p.182). I agree with Barton that Matthew's text sees in the OT verses cited a future promise brought to fulfilment in Jesus.

Following Barton and Kupp my position is that Matthew's text is seeking to present Jesus' life as a fulfilment of Jewish history. Matthew's text is claiming authority by borrowing the authority of older texts whose own authority is accepted. For Matthew's text these citations have found their deepest meaning in Jesus.



Having argued generally that Matthew's text is seeking to present Jesus as a fulfilment of Jewish history it is important to ask what we can conclude more specifically regarding the text. The key question to ask is what was the purpose of Matthew's text in including a certain text from the OT? What did the author of Matthew read this text as prophesying concerning Jesus?

As already discussed in chapter two, Hamilton argues that Matthew's text uses these OT texts as typological fulfilment citations rather than predictive fulfilment citations. Hamilton defines 'predictive fulfilment' as being the belief that, for example, Isa 7:14 was "speaking specifically of the coming Messiah in the distant future" (Hamilton, 2008, p.232) whereas 'typological fulfilment', which Hamilton favours, accepts that the OT text was written to speak to a contemporary context unaware of any more distant future significance to its words, however when seen from the perspective of the NT writers typological fulfilment "sees in the biblical narrative a divinely intended pattern of event"(Hamilton, 2008, p.233), a deeper truth known to God but not to the OT author. Matthew is using OT texts which tell of events which took place centuries earlier, to mirror and give increased meaning to contemporary events.

I have already presented my argument in chapter 2 that when considering the purpose of Matthew's text in using a particular OT text it is necessary to refer to a wider OT passage than just the words cited. To briefly summarise, Dodd and Beale argue that quotations from the OT are included in many of the NT writings on the assumption that readers or hearers would be aware of the wider OT passage from which the citation comes, they argue that the citing of one verse acts as a short-hand reference to a whole passage, the writers intention was not simply to focus on the verse cited but rather to evoke the whole passage in the mind of the reader/hearer (Dodd, 1952, p.61; Beale, 2012, pp.710-711).

I will follow the position of Dodd and Beale in my discussion of the use of OT citations in Matthew's text. In order to do this I must look beyond the immediate meaning of the verse quoted. For example to understand why in Matt 1:23 there is a quote from Isa 7:14 I must look at the wider

passage in Isa 7-8. This position of course raises the question as to how broad is the OT text to which Matthew's text is referring, when Matthew's text references Isa 7:14 or Isa 9:1-2 is the author of Matthew referring to the whole book of Isaiah? Or to the sections which relates to the Assyrian Crisis (Isa 6-12)? Or both? I will discuss this question below.

In this chapter I will discuss Matthew's formula citations, (1) Isa 7:14 at Matt 1:23, (2) Jer 31:15 at Matt 2:18 and (3) Hos 11:1 at Matt 2:15, (4) Mic 5:2 at Matt 2:6, and (5) the unattributed citation at Matt 2:23. I will argue that to differing degrees these citations highlight the theme of displacement and so are relevant to my theme. The purpose of this study is to assess:

1. To what extent is displacement a significant theme in Matthew's infancy narrative.
2. Where the theme of displacement can be established, how is the OT used within the text to present and expound on the theme?

I will discuss each use of a citation on the basis of these questions, no conclusion can be asserted with a high level of certainty because of both the difficulty of knowing which OT sources were available to the author of Matthew and the impossibility of being certain as to the author's intentions, the best I can attempt is to offer a plausible position on the basis of the incomplete evidence.

ii. The use of Isaiah 7:14 at Matthew 1:23

**Matt 1:23**

Ἴδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ  
τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσουσιν  
τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ,

Look, the virgin has in stomach/womb and  
will give birth to a son, and **they** will  
call him the name Emmanuel  
(my translation)

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear  
a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel'  
(NRSV)

**Isa 7:14 (LXX)**

Ἴδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ  
τέξεται υἱόν, καὶ καλέσεις  
τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουήλ·

Look, the virgin has in stomach/womb and  
will give birth to an son, and **you** (sing) will  
call him the name Emmanuel  
(my translation)

Look, the virgin is with child and shall bear  
a son, and shall name him Immanuel.  
(NRSV - adapted<sup>21</sup>)

My assumption of a Greek source<sup>22</sup> renders it unnecessary to delve into the much discussed question of the use of the word παρθένος as a translation for the Hebrew word הַלְוָיָהּ (ha-almah). For Matthew the text from Isaiah reads as παρθένος, this is the basis on which I will discuss the text.<sup>23</sup> Matthew's citation at Matt 1:23 is almost exactly the LXX version the only difference being the conjugation of the verb to call (καλέω) from second-person-singular (you) to third-person-plural (they)<sup>24</sup>.

Brown notes that the citation from Isaiah is "intrusive in the flow of the narrative" (Brown, 1993, p.144), similarly to the other formula citations in Matthew's Infancy narrative Matt 1:23 appears to be an obvious insertion into the narrative, however unlike the other citations at Matt 2:15, Matt 2:17-18 and Matt 2:23 this citation comes in the middle, rather than the end, of the episode (Brown, 1993, p.144). Brown argues that this placing of the formula citation in the middle of a narrative is an attempt to highlight the significance of both of the two names mentioned, the

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<sup>21</sup> The NRSV is a translation from the Masoretic Text, and renders ha-almah as 'young woman'; I have substituting virgin for young woman.

<sup>22</sup> As already noted in chapter two, this is an assertion rejected by Nolland (Nolland, Oct 1996) who argues that Matthew uses a variety of different Hebrew texts. I will assume that Matthew's principal sources were Greek while being aware that this assertion is not universally accepted by Scholars.

<sup>23</sup> Other alternative Greek translations existed at the time Matthew is writing, thus he was either unaware of these translations or chose to use this version; likewise he may have had access to a Hebrew version (Nolland, Oct 1996). I will leave these discussions of literary sources to other studies.

<sup>24</sup> Vermes notes that the text would have more internal logic had the verb καλέω been used in its LXX conjugation. **You** would refer clearly to Joseph, as it is **They** is ambiguous. (Vermes, 2006, p.73)

name Emmanuel from Isaiah and the given name Jesus, this episode ends with the naming of Jesus by Joseph (Matt 1:25b) (Brown, 1993, p.144).

It is my assumption outlined above that Matthew's text is referencing a wider passage than just the verse he cites, however it is important to consider the parameters of this wider text, how can we determine the text to which Matthew refers, be it a section of Isaiah or the whole book? Of Matthew's fourteen formula citations<sup>25</sup>, seven are taken from Isaiah, plus Matt 2:23 is a possible citation from Isa 4:3, and the citation at Matt 13:35 is incorrectly attributed to Isaiah (details from Brown's table of Fulfilment citations: Brown, 1993, p.98); a possible nine out of fourteen citations are (from the perspective of Matthew's text) taken from Isaiah. On this basis I posit that Matthew was familiar with the book of Isaiah and wished to associate Jesus closely with the book.

Focussing down further on the citation; Isa 7:14 is taken from a section of Isaiah (Isa 6-9) which both Kaiser and Widyapranawa suggests was written in response to the Assyrian crisis<sup>26</sup> (Kaiser, 1983, p.114; Widyapranawa, 1990, p.38)<sup>27</sup>, Matthew takes two other formula citations from this section<sup>28</sup> which perhaps signifies the importance of this section for the presentation of Jesus in Matthew's text<sup>29</sup>. These six chapters of Isaiah speak at length against Ahaz the King of Judah criticising his willingness to make sacrifices to the Assyrian gods in exchange for military protection, the passage contrasts Ahaz with a future ruler:

“His authority will grow continually, and there shall be endless peace  
for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold

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<sup>25</sup> Matt 1:23; 2:6; 2:15b; 2:18; 2:23; 3:3; 4:15-16; 8:17; 12:18-21; 13:14-15; 13:35; 21:5; 26:56; 27:9-10. Brown notes that of these fourteen, the categorisation of four as formula citations is debatable (Brown, 1993, p.98); I will assume Brown's widest list.

<sup>26</sup> Sometimes referred to as the Syro-Ephraimite war/conflict.

<sup>27</sup> Widyapranawa gives Isa 7:1-9:7 as relating to the Syro-Ephraimite War, disagreeing with Kaiser who gives Isa 6:1-9:6. The difference holds significance in that Matthew's citation of Isa 6:9 at Matt 13:14 is included within Kaiser's range but not that of Widyapranawa. However the distinction is not significant for this study as Isa 7:14 falls within both ranges. I will use Isa 6-9 as a short hand for this section while acknowledging some disagreement on where this section begins and ends.

<sup>28</sup> Isa 6:9 at Matt 13:14 and Isa 9:1 at Matt 4:15

<sup>29</sup> Verses from Isa 6-9 are cited eight times by other NT authors making a total of eleven citations in the NT.

it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore.”

(Isa 9:7 NRSV)

The textual context of Isa 7:14 within the wider passage of Isa 6-9 is of the proclamation of this future righteous Davidic King in contrast to the unrighteous King Ahaz. It seems reasonable to assume that Matthew wishes to present Jesus as this future righteous ruler. Brown argues that one reason why Matthew's text cites this text is to assert the Davidic link with Jesus, Brown suggests that this is to re-assert Jesus' Davidic ancestry after a confusing birth narrative (Matt 1:18-21) which by asserting Joseph as not being the father of Jesus could therefore be understood as distancing Jesus from Joseph's Davidic descent (Brown, 1993, p.150). In 3iv I discussed the association of Jesus with David in Matthew's text, so I will not repeat that discussion here suffice to state that there is a link to the Davidic kingship in Matthew's use of Isa 7:14. But it is important to note that Brown's assertion of a link to David only makes sense in the context of verses Isa 7:13-14, verse fourteen taken alone and removed from its wider context does not allude to David. If Brown's position is followed then this makes necessary an assumption that the text is alluding to a wider passage of Isaiah, and also to a wider idea about the significance of David.

Carter (Carter, 2001, p.97-102) and Hamilton (Hamilton, 2008, pp.228-247) both argue that when the author of Matthew uses Isa 7:14 he is fully aware of the full Isaian text and is consciously referencing his interpretation of the passage (Isa 6-12) in which this verse sits. I will follow this argument in my discussion below. My task is to assess whether anything more specific can be concluded about this reading of Isaiah in Matthew's text beyond a general association of Jesus with Isaiah's future righteous Davidic King, and to assess whether this citation comments on the theme of displacement.

As already stated above Isa 6:1–9:6 is set in an era when the kingdom of Judah was under threat from neighbouring regional powers, the threat of exile was a very real threat, at this time the northern kingdom of Israel was taken into exile in Assyria; this exile took place in two phases,

one during the time of King Ahaz of Judah, the second and final phases occurred during the reign of King Hezekiah of Judah. This threat of exile is present in the Isaiah text Isa 6:11-13 (Kaiser, 1983, p.116; Sawyer, 1984, p.78; Goldingay, 2001, p.61). It is therefore pertinent to discuss the extent to which the author of Matthew was aware and attached significance to this context.<sup>30</sup>

I will begin by briefly presenting the context of Isa 6-9. This passage is set in a complex political situation during the reign of Ahaz the king of Judah.<sup>31</sup> At this time Judah was one of several small kingdoms which existed in the shadows of two major powers, Assyria and Egypt. To the north of Judah, Israel and Aram formed an alliance and prepared to attack Judah, at the same time Edom to the south conquered a region formerly ruled by Judah, the Judeans were expelled from this region (2Kgs 16:5-6). Isa 7-8 is set at this moment of crisis. The prophet calls upon king Ahaz to have no fear (Isa 7:4) and to remain faithful to God “If you do not stand firm in faith, you shall not stand at all” (Isa 7:9b NRSV). Ahaz chooses not to follow Isaiah’s advice, in response to this double threat King Ahaz seeks help from the king of Assyria, Tiglath-Pileser III (2Kgs 16:7-8). The key verse for Matthew’s text, Isa 7:14, is set at this point in the narrative. Isaiah in challenge to Ahaz predicts a sign, that of a woman who is pregnant and will give birth to a child. These events (Isa 7:13-16) which follow could be argued to prove right Isaiah’s words concerning the son “before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.” (Isa 7:16 NRSV) Soon after Ahaz’s new alliance with Assyria the Assyrian army conquered Aram (2Kgs 16:9) and then a generation later Israel is conquered (2Kgs 17:3-6). Judah is now secure but at a price, in exchange for his alliance with Assyria Ahaz is expected remain obedient to Assyria and to pay homage to the gods of Assyria (2Kgs 16:10-18), an Assyrian altar is

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<sup>30</sup> Kaiser proposes that Isa 6:1-9:6 was composed in stages with an original text which was expanded later. I will not discuss the sources of the Isaian text in detail. Kaiser’s position is that the original version of the Isaian text dates from and relates to the historical moment of the Assyrian Crisis (Kaiser, 1983, pp.114-117).

<sup>31</sup> The summary which follows is a summary of 2K 16:5-20 which both Kaiser and Widyapranawa agree gives the historical context to Isa 7. (Kaiser, 1983, p.137; Widyapranawa, 1990, p.38).

built in Jerusalem an act which Isaiah strongly criticises. (Kaiser, 1983, p.137; Widyapranawa, 1990, p.38).

Isa 7-8 addresses the moment when Ahaz is under threat from Israel and Aram, this is a moment of decision, will Judah seek aid from Egypt or Assyria? Or will Judah go it alone? (Widyapranawa, 1990, p.39) Isa 7:3-4 is highly critical of Ahaz, he argues that Judah should stay away from making deals with the great powers, preferring to trust in the power and faithfulness of God. What the key verse (Isa 7:14) refers to specifically is not clear, however what is clear is that this verse evokes an image of hope. The vision of this passage is that Judah will no longer be drawn to choose to which major power to pay homage and seek protection from others. Instead there is the promise of a land governed by God.

Commenting on the use of Isa 7:14 in Matthew's text Carter writes:

Foley's metonymic approach, in which a small reference evokes larger traditions, enables us to recognize that these themes are not unique to Isa 7-9. They are part of a larger pattern of God's ways of working that the biblical writings present. Similar themes of imperial power as a means of punishment for disobedience and of God's salvation from powerful nations can be elaborated in relation to various big events in biblical traditions.

(Carter, 2001, p.99)

For Carter the Imperial powers, such as Assyria, which dominate Judah are at times used by God as a means of punishment. Carter argues that the use of Isa 7:14 in the Matthean infancy narrative brings together the two texts and therefore two historical moments. In both texts there is a moment of religious and political decision, Israel must decide whether to kneel to the Imperial gods or trust in Yahweh. The act of bowing to the Imperial gods is the act of placing oneself under the authority of this power, the consequence will be oppression. Carter argues that for Matthew's text "life under Roman power is punishment for sin" (Carter, 2001, p.101) For Carter Matthew's text, written in a context of exile post-70CE, is arguing that the call to fidelity to Yahweh as opposed to the Assyrian gods which is made to Ahaz in Isa 6-9 parallels the call to fidelity to Yahweh as

opposed to the Roman gods which is made by Jesus' birth. Both texts use the symbol of a baby to predict a future time of renewed hope (Carter, 2001, p.101).

If the author of Matthew is aware of this context then it is possible that the author sees a link between this moment of biblical history and his own contemporary moment, is Carter right to argue that Matthew's text is drawing a link between the exile of Israel and Judah and his present day exile? Will Israel (post 70CE) submit to Roman rule and honour the Roman emperor and Roman Imperial religion? or will they reject the Roman cult and continue to trust in God?

The key question is whether the author of Matthew was aware or not of this context to the Isaiah text? Was the author deliberately presenting Jesus as a coming righteous King in the mould of Isa 6-9, a righteous king in contrast to the unfaithful Jewish leadership of Jesus' time? Is Matthew's text arguing that the challenges of the late first century CE parallel the challenges of the time of Ahaz? It is impossible to be certain but we can make a judgement based on paralleling both the political context of the Assyrian Crisis and the first century CE.

There are significant historical parallels between the politics of the first century CE and the Assyrian crisis. Ahaz was engaged in the messy power politics of his time and was seeking to ensure security for Judah through political alliances, these alliances required him to pay homage to foreign gods and send some of the wealth of Judah into foreign hands. In the late first century CE, both before and after the Jewish-Roman war the Jewish leadership had been engaged in partnerships with the Roman rulers. Prior to the war sacrifices were offered for the Emperor daily in the Jerusalem Temple and the Jewish people were required to pay heavy taxes in exchange for security and peace with Rome. After the war a tax was levied on Jews to pay for the building of a temple to Jupiter in Rome (Heemstra, 2010, p.1-2). It is possible that Matthew's text is drawing a parallel between these two contexts.

I noted above in chapter 3 that Hezekiah (Ahaz's son and successor) is mentioned in the genealogy (Matt 1:9-10), Hezekiah is a likely person to have been the son/child referred to in Isa



7:14. As king Hezekiah later challenged the alliance of Judah with Assyria it is possible that Matthew's text is intentionally drawing a connection between Hezekiah who freed Judah and Jesus who also brings freedom to the Jewish people. This is a possible link but a weak one, in the genealogy Hezekiah is not highlighted in any way. I do not therefore think this link is central to the intention of the text.

Later in chapter two Matthew's text proclaims a new king (Jesus) in challenge to the existing king (Herod); this parallels Isaiah's proclamation of a new King (the unborn child) in challenge to the existing king (Ahaz). Such a theme is consistent with a wider Matthean theme of Jesus as one who is proclaiming a new kingdom. It also parallels the context of post-70<sup>CE</sup> Judaism:

“The text of Isa 7:14, forged in one situation threatened by imperial power, speaks to another time that knows the same danger. It provides assurance that despite all appearances to the contrary, Rome's empire does not hold sway, the empire is not sovereign, and God is not powerless. In these circumstances God's presence and saving purposes made known through God's designated agent, Jesus, are to be embraced as a challenge to Roman Imperial claims. (Carter, 2001, p.101)

That Matthew's text identifies Jesus as a king, and therefore a political figure is clear. Jesus is eventually crucified as King of the Jews (Matt 27:37), one who has challenged the power of both Rome and the Jewish elite. This proclamation of an independent kingdom away from empire is also suggested by the following narrative in chapter two, in which the magi proclaim the infant Jesus as king (Matt 2:2).

Carter argues that if we assume Isa 7:1-9:7 to be a single piece, it is significant that Matthew's text quotes a verse from near the beginning of this text at the beginning of his narrative, and then quotes from near the end of this section (Isa 9:1-2) at the end of his opening section before Jesus begins his public ministry (Matt 4:15-16) (Carter, 2001, pp.102-103). It would seem as if Matthew's text wishes to explicitly reference this passage from Isaiah and to link it to Jesus.

Now I will turn to some of the counter evidence which argues against this interpretation of Matthew's understanding of Isaiah. Kupp (1996) argues that Matthew is not concerned as to whether or not his use of Isa 7:14 is consistent with the original context of the verse, the author of Matthew believed that the prophets' words were speaking unknowing divine prophecy which spoke to a future reality regardless of the words contemporary meaning. Kupp (quoting Moule) writes: "At times Matthew's use of biblical texts can appear 'to our critical eyes, manifestly forced and artificial and unconvincing'" (Kupp, 1996, p.167 cf Moule, 1977, p.129), Kupp's position follows the position of predictive fulfilment outlined by Hamilton (Hamilton, 2008, p.232). Kupp continues arguing that Matthew's text "shows little awareness that the prophets might actually have been delivering oracles of crucial relevance to their original audiences" (Kupp, 1996, p.167). For Kupp, Matthew's text does not take the OT texts into his story on their own terms, rather the text's understanding of continuity is that the life of Jesus "has finally brought OT prophecy into true light. Its obscure and sometimes cryptic message has become coherent in him" (Kupp, 1996, p.167). This position does not argue either for or against Matthew's knowledge of the OT context of Isa 7:14, it rather argues that the meaning of the verse in its contemporary politico-theological context was not the author's principal concern, the author sees in the verse a new meaning which only makes sense with the birth of Jesus. For Kupp's reading of Matthew, the true meaning of the Isaian formula citation is found in Jesus not in the context of the eighth century reign of King Ahaz.

Another scholar who discusses the context of Isa 7:14 is Moyise, who focusses on the use and meaning of the virgin birth (Moyise, 2013, pp.83-87). However, his study focuses more on the use and meaning of the virgin birth than on the political context. He suggests that some of the wording of Isa 7 is obscure and so "this may have contributed to the idea that its ultimate fulfilment lies in the distant future." (Moyise, 2013, p.86). For Moyise the author of Matthew interprets Isa 7:14 as a prediction of a virgin birth even if this is anachronistic to the contextual

meaning of the OT text (Moyise, 2013, p.87). This is the focus of his study, but for my purposes, there is more to say about the wider aspects of the Isaian passage and its meaning.

A possible middle ground is found in the assertion of Brown already outlined above. the chief concern of Matthew's text is to present Jesus as a Jewish messiah, a legitimate successor to David in distinction from contemporary leadership. As Brown makes clear from his approach to the Isaian text (Brown, 1993, p.147), in order to argue that Isa 7:14 speaks of a Davidic messiah it is necessary to refer to a much wider section of the Isaiah text than just this one single verse, I have already argued above that short citations are added on the understanding that the readers is aware of a wider OT context, to argue as Kupp does that Matthew's text lifts this verse out of its context is to strip the single verse of much of its meaning, given the prominence for associating Jesus with David earlier in Matthew this position seems unlikely. My judgment is that Kupp's argument goes too far. However I acknowledge that because Matthew's text gives us such a brief reference without any explanatory context as to why this citation is included the position argued above (largely based on Carter), while plausible, is hard to argue with any certainty; Matthew's text does not state its position clearly enough, nor does it emphasise the figures of Ahaz and Hezekiah in its genealogy in a way which might suggest it attributes to them a particular significance. There is in the final analysis not enough evidence to argue in either direction with certainty, Matthew's text does not give us a clear steer on its motives. I have presented what I believe is a plausible argument for the theme of displacement being relevant to the use of Isa 7:14 in Matthew's text. Namely that the author assumes that this citation will be understood in its Isaian context, a context of imperial threat from Assyria and pressure to worship Assyrian idols. This threat brings with it an implication of threatened displacement, it is in this context that Isa 7:14 offers hope; for Matthew's text this Isaian context mirrors the first-century Jewish experience under Roman rule. Matthew's text proposes that this same hope parallels the hope now emerging with the birth of Jesus.

iii. The use of Jeremiah 31:15 (LXX 38:15) at Matthew 2:18

**Matt 2:18**

Φωνὴ ἐν Ῥαμὰ ἠκούσθη,  
κλαυθμὸς καὶ ὀδυρμὸς πολὺς·  
Ῥαχὴλ κλαίουσα τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς, καὶ οὐκ ἤθε-  
λεν παρακληθῆναι, ὅτι οὐκ εἰσίν.

“A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud  
lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she  
refused to be consoled, because they are no more.”  
(NRSV)

**Jer 38:15 (LXX)**

(31:15 in MT translations)

Οὕτως εἶπεν κύριος

Φωνὴ ἐν Ραμα ἠκούσθη  
θρήνου καὶ κλαυθμοῦ καὶ ὀδυρμοῦ·  
Ραχηλ ἀποκλαιομένη οὐκ ἤθελεν  
παύσασθαι ἐπὶ τοῖς υἱοῖς αὐτῆς, ὅτι οὐκ  
εἰσίν.

A voice was heard in Rama, of lamentation, and  
weeping, and mourning; Rachel, who was  
crying, would not cease on behalf of her sons,  
because they are no more.  
(translation from Brown, 1993, p.221 – LXX B  
translation)

Brown offers a detailed analysis of Matthew’s citation noting that it does not match any extant version of the OT text either Greek or Hebrew. His conclusion is that Matthew’s Greek version of Jeremiah is no longer extant and is perhaps a Greek rendering of a Hebrew text which differs from the MT (Brown, 1993, pp.221-223).

This short text from Matthew contains several layers of OT references, while Isa 7:14 links Jesus to David this text draws a link to Moses. The narrative verse which precedes the citation (Matt 2:16) tells a story which evokes the story of Exod 1:15-22 in which Pharaoh orders the death of each newborn Hebrew boy, Brown writes: “the story line here ... echoes faithfully Pharaoh’s slaughter of the male infants of the Hebrews.” (Brown, 1993, p.216). The story of Jesus’ escape from this death parallels the story of Moses escape from a similar death in Exod 2:1-10; these stories differ but the general theme is close enough for us to reasonably conclude that Matthew’s text is deliberately presenting Jesus’ origins as an echo of Moses’ origins. In 4bi I will consider more widely how Matthew associates Jesus with Moses so (as with David in the previous section) I will not discuss this theme further here.

Matthew's text gives us a quote from Jer 31:15 (38:15 LXX), following the same method as above with Isa 7:14 I will now consider the wider Jeremiah text from which this verse is taken. The context of this quote is that of the Babylonian exile. Brown argues that Matthew's text uses this Jeremiah text because it evokes both the exodus and the exile, he writes:

"Matthew works to connect this event [*the slaughter of male infants in exodus*] in Egypt with another tragedy in Israelite history, the exile of the tribes to Assyria and Babylon. In the theology of Israel the persecution in Egypt and the Exile were the two greatest trials to which God's people had been subjected

(Brown, 1993, p.216)

I will follow Brown in noting the significance of Matthew's text using a citation which evokes the exile in commentary on a narrative which parallels an episode from the exodus narrative; both events in Jewish history hold significance for Matthew's text.

Metzger and Coogan note that Jer 30-32 is referred to within Jeremiah as the book of consolation, "consisting of oracles whose basic theme is that of hope beyond national disaster" (Metzger & Coogan, 1993, p.345), taken as a whole chapter 31 speaks principally of return from exile. Verse 15 taken in isolation reads as a very sombre text about a bereaved mother however the succeeding verses (16-17) immediately turn to hope:

"Thus says the LORD: Keep your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for there is a reward for your work, says the LORD: they shall come back from the land of the enemy; there is hope for your future, says the LORD: your children shall come back to their own country."

(Jer 31:16-17 NRSV)

The wider context of Jer 30-32 speaks of hope. Moyise also comments on this theme noting that the wider passage of Jer 31 speaks of deliverance (Moyise, 2013, p.73). He asks why, therefore, is the cited verse concerned with sorrow? His discussion considers several possible explanations, and the one which Moyise favours is that of Erickson who argues that the Jeremiah citation is included to highlight a theme of "initial escape followed by return to win victory through suffering alongside his people." (Erickson, 1996, p.21). In this view, even though deliverance is the overarching

message of Matthew's gospel, the path to this deliverance includes suffering. Despite Jesus' escape now he will not avoid suffering later.

In broad agreement with Moyise and Erickson, perhaps the purpose in Matthew's gospel is not to belittle the suffering of Matt 2:16, nor the wider suffering of displacement and war known to his late first century community, too quickly. Nevertheless, Matthew's text wants to proclaim a message of hope specifically by citing a text from Jeremiah which speaks of hope in exile. If we regard the text cited as a reference to a wider passage of Jeremiah known to the author of Matthew either orally or in written form then we can conclude that Matthew's text is meaning to evoke this wider theme, at the present moment you are suffering but God has not forgotten you, this moment will pass and better times will return. Such a theme from Jeremiah set at the moment of Babylonian exile echoes the story of exodus in which the Hebrew people are in slavery but will through exodus be freed.

Davies and Allison note that in Jer 40:1 Ramah is mentioned as a gathering point or holding camp for captives about to be marched to exile in Babylon (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.268), Ramah is about five miles north of Jerusalem. The wailing and loud lamentation of which Jeremiah speaks is for the children of Israel taken into exile. The association with Rachel is drawn from Ramah being the burial place of Rachel mentioned in 1Sam 10:2, Jeremiah follows this placing of Rachel's tomb (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.268). The author of Jeremiah draws a link between Rachel who died in childbirth and the siting of a Babylonian transit camp in the town of her burial. Matthew was most likely also aware of a different OT tradition based on Gen 35:19 and 48:7 which places Rachel's tomb in Bethlehem, so it makes sense that Matthew's text draws the two traditions together, Davies and Allison write: "This is why he can associate Rachel's weeping in Ramah with the slaughter of infants in Bethlehem" (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.268). Davies and Allison continue: "Just as the Jews, amid lamentation and grief, left Ramah to go into exile, so Jesus, amid lamentation and grief, left Bethlehem to go into exile." (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.269). The

relevance of the character Rachel for Matthew's text is two-fold, firstly at Gen 35:16-20, she died in childbirth so there is an indirect link between the pain of motherhood felt by the bereaved mothers of Bethlehem whose children are killed by Herod's order, and secondly at Gen 35:19 and Gen 48:7 she was buried in Bethlehem, her tomb is associated with the city where Matthew's narrative is set.

Already in Matthew's genealogy the text has marked out the exile as a significant point in OT history (Matt 1:11-12, 17), so it comes as no surprise that Matthew's text evokes this historical moment once again. Also given that there is already a link to Moses it is reasonable to posit that the text is connecting the narrative of the exile and the exodus together, by referring to both Moses and the Exile in close proximity we can perhaps deduce a theme of exile (and promised return) as a wider Matthean theme. As already discussed in chapter 3 in the genealogy we also find mention of the Babylonian exile, and in 4bi I will discuss allusions to Moses. Repeated mention of similar themes increases the likelihood that these connections are a genuine intention of the text.

Wright argues strongly that the theme of exile was significant for first century Jews, and that this was true of the Matthean community, Jesus is presented as one who will solve the problem of exile. Wright argues that Moses is evoked so as to point to a new covenant between God and Israel. He writes:

When the new David comes to save his people from their present exile, it will be like a new exodus, a new covenant.

(Wright, 1992, p.386).

Wright does not comment on the citation from Jer 31:15 in his discussion, but his line of argument is consistent with my reading of the use of this OT text in Matthew's text, the problem of exile continues for Israel, so stories of the exodus and the exodus covenant are presented as the path out of exile, God has rescued Israel previously and is doing so again in Jesus.

Knowles argues against this reading of Matthew's text, he highlights that because Matthew's text does not quote the instruction not to weep in verse 16 the text is taking verse 15 out of context (Knowles, 1993, p.43). For Knowles Matthew's text has used this verse from Jeremiah because of its immediate relevance to the events of Matt 2:16, that the context of Jer 31 places the verse in a different context is not significant for Knowles, he believes that Matthew's text is not interested in this wider framing. I disagree with Knowles, I have argued above that for Matthew's text the wider context of Jer 31 is significant, the author is doing more than simply offering an OT prophecy which matches his narrative. Following Grundy and Brown I believe that the author of Matthew has constructed this narrative principally to evoke the stories of the exodus and exile and to associate Jesus with these OT episodes.

If we were to study this citation from Jeremiah in isolation we might conclude that to assert all of these references to the OT is to read too much into Matthew's text, however my thesis argues that displacement is a theme to which Matthew's text returns, if I am successful in arguing the significance of this point more widely then it lends credibility to an argument in relation to a particular text that Matthew's text is concerned with the theme of displacement. When this citation is read in the context of the wider Infancy narrative where there are several references to exile and where gentle allusions are made to this theme in multiple places we can be more sure of the validity of these parallels. Matthew's text has drawn parallels to Moses in the killing of the infants (Matt 2:16), the Babylonian exile in the genealogy (Matt 1:11-12,17), to the experience of suffering motherhood in the figure of Rachel (Matt 2:18), and to the historical significance of Bethlehem (Matt 2:6). Matthew's text draws these disparate narratives together to offer a message of hope, and of the faithfulness of God.

These multi-layered references when taken into account alongside the wider religious and political context speak to a historical moment of acute imperial oppression in Matthew's narrative. I suggest that these OT images likely spoke of hope for a Christian-Jewish community living in the



aftermath of the Jewish-Roman War, exiles of this war in a diaspora city, and to some extent further exiled from the synagogue community. Matthew's text shares a message of suffering now which will in time turn to rejoicing later. This theme prefaces the wider narrative of the gospel in which Jesus moved towards suffering but ultimately passes through this suffering to new life. The argument in Matthew's text is that this story of suffering for a time being followed by salvation from God is one which is mirrored in the history of Israel.

iv. **The use of Hosea 11:1 at Matthew 2:15**

**Matt 2:14-15**

ὁ δὲ ἐγερθεὶς παρέλαβεν τὸ παιδίον καὶ τὴν μητέρα αὐτοῦ νυκτὸς καὶ ἀνεχώρησεν εἰς Αἴγυπτον, καὶ ἦν ἐκεῖ ἕως τῆς τελευτῆς Ἡρώδου· ἵνα πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ κυρίου διὰ τοῦ προφήτου λέγοντος, **Ἐξ Αἰγύπτου ἐκάλεσα τὸν υἱόν μου.**

Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, **'Out of Egypt I have called my son.'** (*NRSV – citation in bold*)

Brown considers the use of Hos 11:1 at Matt 2:15 to be of Matthean origin rather than being part of a pre-Matthean source text, while emphasising that the citation is too short to draw strong conclusions Brown notes that Matthew's text differs from the LXX so is most probably taken from a "Greek rendition that is literally faithful to the Hebrew" (Brown, 1993, pp.220-221). Scholars have noted that Matthew's text takes as a prophecy a text which in its OT context is commentary on past events rather than prediction of future events (France, 1985, p.86).

It is also noted that this citation is used by Matthew's text in a way which points ahead to events narrated in Matt 2:19-21; Brown suggests different reasons for this positioning, one possibility being that Matthew's text seeks to evoke the Exodus at the first mention of Egypt in the narrative, another possibility being that Matthew's text wishes to mention the Exodus ahead of referencing the Exile in Matt 2:17-18 (Brown, 1993, p.220). Brown further suggests that the use of

this verse seeks to draw a link between Jesus' early life and the journey of the people of Israel both to and from Egypt, Brown writes:

"Jesus relives not only the Exodus of Israel from Egypt but also (and first) the departure of Israel from Canaan into Egypt. This detail is to some extent explained by the fact that the main figure in the flight to Egypt is Jesus' legal father Joseph, who plays the role of Joseph the patriarch bringing Jacob/Israel down to Egypt." (Brown, 1993, p.216; Brackets Brown).

I will address the links between the infancy narrative and the Genesis Joseph story in 4biii so will not pursue this theme here.

Both Grundy and Beale comment on the textual link back to the story of Balaam in the book of Numbers; Beale observes that Hosea references Num 23-24 in Hos 11 (Beale, 2012, pp.700-702), Grundy also notes the link between Numbers and Hosea (Grundy, 1994, p.34). Given that Matthew's text perhaps makes a reference to this Numbers text with its mention of the star in Matt 2:2,9 we can tentatively posit that the citation from Hosea might be a conscious conscious reference to the Numbers passage, I will return to this theme in 4biv.

Following the same method as used with the citations addressed above I will now turn to the wider context of Hos 11:1 within the book of Hosea. The wider theme of Hosea is that of accusing Israel of being unfaithful to their covenant with God, God's faithfulness has been met with unfaithfulness. The text moves between passages which speak of God's concern and care for Israel and passages which speak with anger about the potential consequences of unfaithfulness. For example Hos 10:10 warns of punishment:

I will come against the wayward people to punish them;  
And nations shall be gathered against them  
When they are punished for their double iniquity  
(Hos 10:10 NRSV)

The context given by Hos 10:9 makes it clear that the wayward people referred to are Israel. This warning of punishment is followed two verse later by a call to righteousness:

Sow for yourselves righteousness;  
reap steadfast love;  
break up your fallow ground;  
for it is time to seek the Lord,  
that he may come and rain righteousness upon you.

(Hos 10:12 NRSV)

In context Hos 11:1 is a call to Israel to remember its origins in the exodus. In the extended passage God is described in terms of a parent caring for a child:

Yet it was I who taught Ephraim to walk,  
I took them up in my arms;  
but they did not know that I healed them.  
I led them with cords of human kindness,  
with bands of love.  
I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks.  
I bent down to them and fed them.

(Hos 11:3-4 NRSV)

But the text is also firm in speaking of the consequences of unfaithfulness in verse 5:

“They shall return to the land of Egypt,  
And Assyria shall be their king,  
Because they have refused to return to me.”

(Hos 11:5 NRSV)

Hosea was written before the exile of either the Kingdom of Israel or Judah (G.Davies, 1993, p.13). However its message is in accord with a wider OT theme of the exile being the consequence of Israel’s unfaithfulness, this possibility of exile is an important theme (G.Davies, 1993, pp.36-37). As I have noted above Carter argues that Matthew’s gospel interprets the “defeat of Jerusalem in 70CE as God’s punishment of the religious leaders for misleading the people into rejecting Jesus” (Carter, 2000 (book), p.1). For Carter this is a key theme for the gospel including the infancy narrative; so Matthew’s text places into the story of Jesus’ birth a warning of coming exile and of the consequences of unfaithfulness. Following Carter it is possible that Matthew cites Hosea just before the massacre of the children and attempted murder of the baby Jesus as a reminder of this OT theme, unfaithfulness leads to exile.

Moyise further links the Hosea text to the Exodus narrative and suggests that it is used to draw a link between Moses and Jesus. He discusses whether or not Hos 11:1 is cited to highlight a typological fulfilment of Jesus following the path of Israel led by Moses. He notes that travel to and from Egypt was plausible at the time, so such a journey could have taken place and therefore is not automatically a typological fulfilment, it could rather be a narration of a real event. In his discussion Moyise draws a strong link between the flight and return from Egypt and the narrative of Exod 1-4. He argues that evoking this OT passage is the intention of the author of Matthew. (Moyise, 2013, p.67), which again I would be in broad agreement with.

Matthew's text is very brief (a point Brown stresses strongly; Brown, 1993, p.220), and there are too many other possible reasons for its inclusions for us to be able to connect its inclusion to the theme of displacement with any level of certainty. It must suffice to argue that it is possible that Matthew's text cites Hosea at least in part as a reference to the theme of displacement. Grundy offers a different interpretation of the text, he acknowledges that Matthew's text seeks to link Jesus to the exodus, but argues that the stronger parallel in Matt 2:14-15 is that of Joseph's protection of Jesus mirroring the protection of Israel by God; "as a son he, like Israel, receives God's fatherly protection in Egypt" (Grundy, 1994, p.34). Given that the Hosea text oscillates between speaking of the negative consequences of unfaithfulness and the faithfulness of God, Grundy's suggestion is entirely plausible. The narrative context of Hosea allows for both possibilities, they are not contradictory, Matthew's text may be consciously evoking both themes.

v. The use of Micah 5:2 (LXX 5:1) and 2 Sam 5:2 at Matthew 2:6

Matt 2:5

Καὶ σύ, Βηθλέεμ γῆ Ἰούδα,  
οὐδαμῶς ἐλαχίστη εἶ ἐν τοῖς ἡγεμόσιν Ἰούδα:  
ἐκ σοῦ γὰρ ἐξελεύσεται ἡγούμενος,  
ὅστις ποιμανεῖ τὸν λαόν μου τὸν Ἰσραήλ.<sup>32</sup>

And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,  
are by no means least among the rulers of  
Judah;  
for from you shall come a ruler  
who is to shepherd my people Israel.

(NRSV)

Mic 5:2 (LXX 5:1)

Καὶ σύ, Βηθλεεμ οἶκος τοῦ Εφραθα,  
ὀλιγοστός εἶ τοῦ εἶναι ἐν χιλιάσιν Ἰουδα·  
ἐκ σοῦ μοι ἐξελεύσεται τοῦ εἶναι εἰς ἄρχοντα  
ἐν τῷ Ἰσραήλ,  
καὶ αἱ ἐξοδοὶ αὐτοῦ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐξ ἡμερῶν  
αἰῶνος.<sup>33</sup>

And thou, Bethlehem, house of Ephratha,  
art few in number to be [reckoned] among  
the thousands of Juda;  
[yet] out of thee shall one come forth to me,  
to be a ruler of Israel;  
and his goings forth were from the beginning,  
[even] from eternity.<sup>34</sup>

Brown and Garland suggest that the citation from Matt 2:6 is a composite citation taken from two OT sources Mic 5:1 (LXX) and 2 Sam 5:2 (Brown, 1993, p.184; Garland, 1993, p.29). 2 Sam 5:2 reads:

For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The LORD said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel.'

(2 Sam 5:2, NRSV)

The author of Matthew seems to have adapted source texts in formulating his citation. 'House of Ephratha' is modified to 'in the land of Judah'. Matthew's text adds 'by no means' a detail which transforms the significance of Bethlehem in the citation. The 'thousands' of Micah is changed to 'rulers' in Matthew's text and the third line is reworded significantly removing 'to me' and any mention of Israel. On this last point Brown suggests that this is because Israel is mentioned in the next section from 2 Sam (Brown, 1993, pp.185-186). The sentence taken from 2 Sam 5:2 is also a

<sup>32</sup> <http://greekbible.com>

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.academic-bible.com/en/online-bibles/septuagint-lxx/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.ellopos.net/elpenor/greek-texts/septuagint/>

paraphrase. Discussing these adaptations to the sources Davies & Allison suggest that we might describe this passage as an 'interpretation' rather than a 'citation' (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.242).

Following the methodology of Dodd and Beale outlined above I will consider the wider passages of Micah and 2 Samuel. Mic 5:1-6 follows a similar theme to that already discussed in relation to Isa 7:14. The text speaks of a forthcoming birth which heralds a new time of hope (verse 3). A few verses later the text speaks of the threat of Assyrian invasion "If the Assyrians come into our land and tread upon our soil" (Mic 5:5 NRSV). Verse six follows a similar theme, "They shall rule the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod with the drawn sword; they shall rescue us from the Assyrians if they come into our land or tread within our border" (Mic 5:6 NRSV). This suggests that (similarly to Isa 7:14) the context of this text is the Assyrian Crisis which I discussed at length in 4a*i*, I will not repeat that discussion here. The details of shepherding and the mention of Bethlehem suggest that the Micah text is seeking to evoke David, and to look forward to a future Davidic ruler. Garland suggests the change of 'Ephrata' in Matthew's text to 'the land of Judah' is a further attempt to heighten the association to David (Garland, 1993, p.29). The text from 2 Sam 5:2 is explicitly about David. As discussed above in relation to Isa 7:14 the future ruler of the Micah text could also be an after the event reference to Hezekiah. If we assume this interpretation then it follows that Matthew's text is seeking to associate Jesus with the great rulers of Israel's past and to present him as their successor. Much of the discussion above relating to Isa 7:14 holds true here, the use of a text from a similar context so soon after Isa 7:14 in Matthew's text is further argument that the context of the Assyrian crisis is significant. We can posit that Matthew's text might include this citation in order to evoke a historical example of imperial threat and more specifically the threat of displacement. This context parallels the context of Roman rule.

It is important to note that the Matthean use of this citation differs from the other citations in that it is attributed to "all the chief priests and scribes of the people" (Matt 2:4 NRSV), rather

than being in the voice of the narrator as elsewhere. This detail perhaps suggest that Matthew's text wishes us to read that the leaders of Israel already have an understanding that an alternative ruler to Herod is expected, their use of this citation points the Magi away from Herod as King, with this in mind it is perhaps not surprising that Herod reacts as he later does. In the late first century Matthean context we can tentatively posit that this detail might be a reference to the Jewish community who live in their diaspora city, able to see that the emperor is not really the king of Israel but also unwilling to accept the Matthean communities understanding of Jesus. Moyise argues that this prophecy of the messiah's birth in Bethlehem was well known, he offers Jn 7:42 as evidence that this view was in circulation. For Moyise the inclusion of this citation is a means of emphasising Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, and therefore connecting Jesus with David (Moyise, 2013, pp.47-51). This later point – the connection with David – is where I would place the emphasis in terms of Matthew's narrative and the theme of displacement.

In summary the citation from Mic 5:2 and 2 Sam 5:2 is included as a reference to David and to the town of Bethlehem, it also has a narrative purpose of directing the Magi to Bethlehem. Furthermore the wider context of this citation in Micah evokes the context of the Assyrian crisis. This context brings with it a theme of threatened displacement.

#### vi. The citation at Matthew 2:23

##### Matt 2:23

καὶ ἐλθὼν κατώκησεν εἰς πόλιν λεγομένην  
Ναζαρέτ, ὅπως πληρωθῇ τὸ ῥηθὲν διὰ τῶν  
προφητῶν ὅτι Ναζωραῖος κληθήσεται.<sup>35</sup>

There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He will be called a Nazorean.' (NRSV)

Brown notes that this citation is "not indisputably related to an identifiable OT text" (Brown, 1993, p.223). Garland comments that Matthew's text refers to "the prophets" in the plural rather than

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<sup>35</sup> <http://greekbible.com>

a particular prophet (Garland, 1993, p.31), this detail suggest that the author was perhaps aware that this citation is a Matthean creation based on OT sources rather than an actual citation.

We know from reading the NT more widely that Jesus was understood to be from Nazareth, outside of the two infancy narratives Jesus' birth in Bethlehem is not mentioned. So, following a narrative which gives Jesus' birth place as Bethlehem the author of Matthew need to explain how it is that Jesus was commonly thought to be from Nazareth (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.274). Brown suggest that the place names mentioned in the three citations in Matt 2:1-18 all relate to the great moments of OT history; Bethlehem, Egypt and Ramah. In Matt 2:19-23 there are three further place names, Israel, Galilee and Nazareth, which Brown argues look forward to the adult life of Jesus (Brown, 1993, p.218). Garland add two further comments, firstly that Nazareth the place is not mentioned at all in the OT (Garland, 1993, p.31). This omission is very inconvenient for Matthew's text which draws so heavily on the OT. All of the previous formula citations relate to place names, if Matthew's text is to make an OT reference to the final place named in its infancy narrative then this reference would therefore have to be contrived. Secondly Garland notes that in Acts 24:5 the Christians are described as "the sect of the Nazarenes" (NRSV), he notes that this seems to be a pejorative term. Garland suggest that Nazareth was an insignificant backwater town so comparable to being called a country bumpkin (Garland, 1993, p.31). If we follow Garland then this detail suggests a link to displacement from the centre, in Matthew's narrative Jesus grows up in an insignificant rural location rather than in a more elite context.

So far my discussion has been focused on why Matthew's text would seek to reference Nazareth and so search the OT for a relevant citation. My methodology in this study has been to argue that OT context is significant, yet in this case the OT source is not clear. I will first attempt to identify a source for the citation and then consider possible contextual implications.

There are three potentially relevant texts. Brown and Davies & Allison offer Isa 11:1 and Judg 16:17 as possible sources for Matthew 2.23 (Brown, 1993, p.223 / Davies & Allison, 1988,



p.277). Moyise offers Judg 13:7 as another possible source, this text follows similar theme (Moyise, 2013, p.56).

So he told her his whole secret, and said to her, 'A razor has never come upon my head; for I have been a nazirite to God from my mother's womb. If my head were shaved, then my strength would leave me; I would become weak, and be like anyone else.'

(Judges 16:17 NRSV)

but he said to me, "You shall conceive and bear a son. So then drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean, for the boy shall be a nazirite to God from birth to the day of his death." '

(Judges 13:7 NRSV)

Elaborating on this, Brown discuss that Matthew's text derives the citation from the word Nazir, one consecrated or made holy by a vow (Brown, 1993, p.210). Moyise offers the same argument but gives Jdg 13:7 as his source (Moyise, 2013, p.56). Davies & Allison suggest that the citation rather than being to a single verse in Judges could be a wider reference to the Nazirite vows of Num 6 which is an important theme in the story of Samson, Judg 13-16. They also refer to Amos 2:11-12. (Davies & Allison, 1988, 276). The Nazirite vow was a vow of consecration to God, Davies & Allison and Brown suggest that Matthew's text is playing on the similarity of the words Nazirite and Nazareth (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.276; Brown, 1993, p.223). Brown notes that Jesus is referred to as "The Holy One of God" elsewhere in the NT, Mk 1:24, Lk 4:34; Jn 6:69 (Brown, 1993, p.211), although the lack of such a naming Matthew's text is significant, Brown suggests that this is Matthew's equivalent.

The counter to this argument is that later in the Gospel, and more widely in the NT, it becomes clear that Jesus did not keep the Nazirite vow as stipulated in Num 6, Moyise argues:

It is ... difficult to imagine Jesus identifying with the Nazirite vows

(Moyise, 2013, p.57).

Moyise therefore regards it as unlikely that evoking the Nazirite vow is the intention of Matt 2:23 (Moyise, 2013, p.57). It is possible that Matthew's text is making this link identifying Jesus as one

consecrated to God, but if we accept such a link then we must acknowledge that it contradicts the later story of Jesus. It is however possible that Matthew's text forces such a link because of a desire to find an OT reference for Nazareth. If that is the case it calls into question my methodology that the OT context is significant.

A shoot shall come out from the stock of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

(Is 11:1 NRSV)

Brown discusses that Matthew's text derives the citation from the word *naser* which means "branch". The context of the Isaiah text is that of a coming leader in the mould of David (Brown, 1993, pp.211-212). Davies & Allison note that later Christian writers lend significance to this Isaiah text which suggest a wider application of it to Jesus than just Matthew's text (Davies & Allison, 1988, pp.277-278). Assuming Isaiah as the source links this citation with the citation from Isa 7:14 (Moyise, 2013, p.58) and the themes which I have already discussed above. Albeit that this text falls outside the range which I identified as relating to the Assyrian crisis, although as already noted the citation of Isa 9:1-2 at Matt 4:15-16 is also outside that range.

Of the two possible derivations of Nazorean I am more convinced by the Isaiah link as Matthew's text references Isaiah in other places, and such a reference also refers to David a theme which is a clear intention of Matthew's text. However given the lack of clarity in the citation it is not possible to argue this point with a high degree of certainty.

If the Isaiah text is the source for Matthew's text then my discussion at 4a<sup>ii</sup> relating to the Assyrian crisis holds true here also, Matthew's text is reminding its readers of the threat of war and displacement experienced at that time. I acknowledge that making such a link on the basis of Matt 2:23 is too tenuous, without Isa 7:14 already being cited earlier in Matthew's text I would not suggest such a link, I merely note that if my earlier argument hold true then it also does here.

vii. **Summary and conclusions on the use of OT citations and the theme of displacement in Matthew's infancy narrative.**

In this chapter I have argued that Matthew's text includes citations from the OT at least in part to highlight the theme of displacement. I have discussed the citations from Isa 7:14, Jer 31:15, Hos 11:1, Mic 5:2 & 2 Sam 5:2, and the citation at Matt 2:23. In my discussion I have followed the Methodology of Dodd and Beale which argues that citations are to be understood as references to wider OT passages, Matthew's text uses these citations in order to evoke their OT context.

I have discussed how the use of Isa 7:14 in Matthew's text presents an OT context of Imperial threat and possible exile in parallel both with the story of Jesus and with the context of the Matthean community. The call of Isaiah against alliance with Assyria and the promise of a new leader prefigures Jesus as a king like the king promised by Isaiah, and presents to the Matthean community a model for how they should relate to Rome. The citation from Mic 5:2 also relates to this context and follows many of the same themes. The mention of Bethlehem and the coupling with 2 Sam 5:2 strongly emphasises the link to David. The citation of Jer 31:15 is a clear link to the Babylonian exile, the text evokes the image of Ramah which was a transit camp, the verse laments the deportation to Babylon, Matthew's text evokes this same sorrow for the death of the children of Bethlehem and likely for those killed or forced to flee the Jewish-Roman war. In my discussion of Hos 11:1 I argued that the text points back to the Exodus and to the unfaithfulness of Israel but that despite this God remains faithful. Matthew's text includes this citation as a commentary of the return of Jesus and family from Egypt, Jesus follows the same path as his nation into Egypt and then by God's faithfulness out of Egypt. This text acts as a warning that unfaithfulness leads to exile but also that God will remain faithful, displacement does not last forever. The citation at Matt 2:23 cannot be conclusively attributed to any specific OT text, I have discussed possibilities for the OT source. I am most convinced by the arguments that the text is adapted from Isa 11:1, assuming this source would allow us to link this citation to David and the themes of Isaiah already discussed

above. However because it not possible to be certain of the origin of this citation it is therefore very difficult to argue with any certainty in relation to this citation.

To conclude I have argued that highlighting the theme of displacement is at least part of the reason why Matthew's text includes these OT citations, particularly in the case of Jer 31:15. Jesus is presented as a figure who experiences displacement and the author wishes to parallel the story of Jesus with OT stories and reflections which relate to displacement, citations are one method by which this is achieved.

**CHAPTER 4**  
**THE THEME OF DISPLACEMENT**  
**IN MATTHEW'S INFANCY NARRATIVE**  
**MATTHEW 1:18-2:23**

**b) USE OF OT CHARACTERS AND**  
**ALLUSIONS**

As Matthew’s infancy continues into his narrative section (Matt 1:18-2:25) the author continues to associate Jesus with OT figures, in this chapter I will attempt to draw out these associations, and to comment taking each OT figure in turn rather than moving sequentially through the gospel text.

i. Moses

Moses is not directly mentioned anywhere in the infancy narrative rather he is alluded to by means of narrative parallels in which the experiences of the infant Jesus are close to those of the infant Moses. There are two chief example of this parallel, the first is that as new born babies both are threatened by the rulers of their nation (Exod 1:22–2:10 and Matt 1:16-18). Both Moses and Jesus escape the death experienced by their contemporaries because another character takes decisive action to save them, both Moses’ mother in Exodus and Joseph in Matthew take actions which save the life of Moses and Jesus respectively. The second parallel comes a few verses later when the family return from Egypt, Allison notes that Matt 2:19-21 closely parallels the LXX version of Exod 4:19-20:

**Exodus 4:19-20 and Matthew 2:19-21**

<p>After these many days the king of Egypt died.</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">The Lord said</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">To Moses in Midian</p> <p style="padding-left: 100px;">“Go back to Egypt,</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">For all those seeking your life have died”</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Moses, taking his wife and his children,</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">Mounted them on asses and returned to Egypt</p> <p>Exod 4:19-20</p> <p>(Translation from LXX by Allison (Allison, 1993, pp.142-143))</p>	<p>When Herod died,</p> <p>an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt</p> <p>and said, ‘Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel,</p> <p>for those who were seeking the child’s life are dead.’</p> <p>Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.</p> <p>Matt 2:19-21 (NRSV)</p>
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Allison acknowledges that these two narratives parallel more closely the figures of Moses and Joseph, rather than Moses and Jesus, however Allison maintains the validity of the Moses/Jesus

parallel on the basis that it is Jesus'/Moses' lives which are being threatened in the respective stories, this threat is the key common feature (Allison ,1993, pp. 143-144).

Allison argues that Matthew's text is drawing a direct parallel between Moses and Jesus, this is part of a wider argument whereby Allison argues that the presentation of Jesus as a new Moses is a central theme throughout Matthew's Gospel (Allison, 1993, pp.142-143); the strength of Allison's position is enhanced by his highlighting of multiple parallels between Jesus and Moses throughout the Gospel this gives weight to us recognising these parallels as deliberately present in the Infancy narrative.

Luz agrees with Allison that these two episodes (Matt 1:16-18; 2:19-21) are consciously paralleling their corresponding Exodus texts (Exod 1:22-2:10; 4:19-20). However Luz disagrees with Allison's conclusions, for Luz there is a stronger parallel between Moses and Joseph than between Moses and Jesus; furthermore Luz argues that the central and clearest correspondence is that of Herod and Pharaoh (Luz, 1989, p.144, footnote 13). As already noted Allison's counterpoint to Luz is to note that there is a key parallel between Moses and Jesus in the fact that it is their lives which are sought (Allison, 1993, p.143). It should be noted that Exod 1:22-2:10; and Exod 4:19-20 relate to two separate occasions when Moses' life is in danger, fleeing from one threat as a baby and then returning from a completely different threat as an adult; for Allison Matthew's text parallels these episodes as if they were one displacement and return episode.

Allison also notes two other connections; he notes that Matthew's infancy narrative mirrors Josephus' narrative of the infancy of Moses in *Antiquities* and that it has similarities to some Rabbinic narratives of Moses birth (Allison, 1993, pp.144-157). In this study which focuses on Matthean allusions to the OT I will not comment on these parallels in any depth beyond some brief observations. These sources are at best contemporary with Matthew's text and most likely later, Matthew's text is not using these texts as his source, however we can conclude that both

Matthew and these later writers are drawing from a common source whether written or oral.

Allison writes:

“It follows that the basic structure of Matt 1:18ff. Was not invented by the First Evangelist. It was in fact not the invention of any Christian. Rather, it was borrowed from the Jewish traditions about Moses”

(Allison, 1993, p.157)

I both agree and disagree with Luz and Allison to the extent that I think Matthew’s allusions to OT texts are very mixed, Matthew’s text does not restrict itself to single typologies, rather it makes multiple connections between Jesus and OT figures and narratives. I see no need to draw premature conclusions as to which parallel is the central one. An overarching theme in Matthew’s text is the linking of Jesus to all of Jewish history not just to one particular figure or event.

More important to this study is to note that in both parallels noted by Allison the theme of displacement is present. In Matthew’s text Jesus flees from Bethlehem in danger, Moses similarly flees Egypt in danger. Given the uncertainty noted above as to which Matthean character specifically parallels which OT character I assert that it is this experience of displacement which is the central theme for Matthew’s text, the text is less interested in associating Jesus with a specific character and more concerned to show that Jesus is one following the path of the nation of Israel who experienced displacement in Egypt.

The association of Jesus with Moses and displacement continues beyond the infancy narrative, these further allusions increase the likelihood that the infancy narrative allusions are genuine. Davies and Allison argues that Jesus’ baptism in Matt 3:13-17 parallels the crossing of the sea in Exod 14 (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.328), and Allison argues that Jesus’ teaching in Matthew’s gospel is closely associated with the teachings of Moses in the Pentateuch (Allison, 1993, pp.172-173). Following Allison it makes narrative sense that before presenting a re-telling of these histories Matthew’s text places Jesus as an exile in Egypt. As noted above the text is more interested in presenting themes than in a consistent narrative, we should not worry that the



family's return from Egypt in Matt 2:21-23 makes superfluous the crossing of the sea paralleled by Matt 3:13-17; the text is interested in evoking images from Israel's history not in re-telling the story exactly.

I will now assess the allusions to Moses in Matthew's text against Allison's guideline's outlined in 2v (Allison, 1993, pp.21-23). As already noted Allison's first two criteria are not at issue, so I will begin this discussion from the third guideline. Allison's third criterion is that the allusion must be clear. In Matthew's infancy Moses is not named, however in my discussion above I believe that scholars have highlighted enough narrative parallels for the generalised linking of Jesus to Moses to be valid. Criterion four assesses whether the allusion is prominent, in the case of Moses his prominence as an OT figure is clear. Likewise criterion five asks whether other contemporary (in our case NT) authors make similar allusions, again the importance of Moses in the NT is common enough not to need to be extensively argued. Criterion six is more challenging, it is hard to argue that any of the details which allude to Moses can be said to do so exclusively, particularly as exodus imagery is commonplace in the OT. There are different possibilities as to whether Matthew's text is chiefly alluding to the figure of Moses, to the story of the Exodus, or to the importance of the land<sup>36</sup>; all of these potential chief concerns would inevitably involve referencing other subsidiary elements. I can see no way of conclusively determining the central allusion of the text or even of ascertaining that such a central focus exists. So to conclude this section I believe that Matthew's text contains elements which strongly suggest the author is alluding to Moses and more specifically to Moses as a displaced person, but these allusions are not clear enough to be certain.

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<sup>36</sup> Although Moses does not enter the promised land the land is an important theme in the story of Moses. Moses plays a significant role in leading Israel towards the promised land.

## ii. The Creations Narratives - Matthew 1:18b

Above in 3ii I have discussed the links to the creation story at Matt 1:1a, this section will focus on Matt 1:18b.

### Matt 1:18b

πρὶν ἢ συνελθεῖν αὐτοῦς εὐρέθη ἐν γαστρὶ ἔχουσα ἐκ πνεύματος ἁγίου.

but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

(NRSV)

Matthew's text attributes Jesus' origins to πνεύματος ἁγίου<sup>37</sup>. Kupp argues that Matthew's text is "little concerned with the details of conception and birth per se; for the narrator the origin of the Messiah Jesus is nothing less than a creative act of YHWH's Spirit" (Kupp, 1996, p.55). Davies and Allison argue that this use of the term πνεύματος ἁγίου is a reference to the concept of divine creation in the OT, they cite six OT references which argue that from the perspective of the OT Creation is the work of the Spirit<sup>38</sup> (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.201), they continue arguing that "The Spirit was traditionally understood to be the source of (human) life"<sup>39</sup> (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.201). As noted above in relation to Matt 1:1a Matthew's text is seeking to present Jesus as a new beginning, a new act of creation by God. Perhaps this is why the genealogy does not end with the birth of a child in the usual way, that line is stopped, God re-enters the world and creates a new human being. Kupp continues: "the unequivocal establishment of YHWH as 'first cause' – from the beginning the God of Israel is active and sovereign in the life of his chosen Messiah." (Kupp, 1996, p.55)

For Matthew's text the people of God in the OT stories of, and commentaries on, creation were created out of πνεύματος ἁγίου, throughout the infancy narrative Jesus is presented as an archetype of the people, his creation out of πνεύματος ἁγίου mirrors that of the human race as a

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<sup>37</sup> Contrary to the NRSV translation Matthew's text includes no definite article before πνεύματος ἁγίου.

<sup>38</sup> Gen 1:2; Job 26:13; Ps 33:6; Ps 104:30; Isa 32:15; 2 Bar 21:4

<sup>39</sup> Davies & Allison base their view on: Isa 11:2; 42:1; 61:1; 1 Enoch 49:1-4; 62:2; Jdt 24:2; Psalm of Solomon 17:37

whole. By linking Jesus to the first creation Matthew's text makes a link not just with the Jewish people but with all of humanity, Matthew's text is able to reach out to both Jewish and Gentile members of his community.

The Spirit is not just present in creation, Keener notes that Jesus' birth out of the πνεύματος ἁγίου is followed in Matt 3:16 by his being empowered by this same spirit. (Keener, 2009, p.86).<sup>40</sup> Davies and Allison note that "it was believed that messianic times would see a fresh and full coming of the Holy Spirit"<sup>41</sup> (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.201). Charette takes this theme further in his study of the Spirit in Matthew's Gospel arguing that in the OT leadership could be proper and effective only insofar as it was gifted with the Spirit of God (Charette, 2000, pp.27-31). Charette comments that in 1 Chr 3:17 and Jer 22:30 the line of Davidic kings comes to an end, he writes: "The appearance of Jesus thus marks the beginning of a new era for the people of God, including the return of kingship to Israel." (Charette, 2000, p.38). Charette notes that: "the prophets associate this time of restoration with the renewed activity of God's Spirit" (Charette, 2000, p.38) He goes on:

"in the Old Testament the Spirit of God is regularly viewed as the agent of God's activity and associated especially with the original work of creation ..... Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, the divine creative power, Jesus the Messiah is conceived and with that conception the redemption associated with the Messiah is begun." (Charette, 2000, pp.38-39)

After having presented Jesus as a new creation and a new leader by πνεύματος ἁγίου, a few verses later Matthew's text seeks to link Jesus back into the line of Jewish history presented through the genealogy, through Joseph's adoption of Jesus he is given a place in this line (Matt 1:24-25). Brown notes that in the culture of this time paternity by adoption was no less valid than biological paternity, "Joseph, by exercising the father's right to name the child, acknowledges Jesus

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<sup>40</sup> Keener does not note that the phrase πνεύματος ἁγίου is not used in Matt 3:16, the text rather speaks of a dove coming on him from the heavens.

<sup>41</sup> Davies & Allison base their view on: Isa 44:3-4; Ezek 37:1-14; Joel 2:28-29

and thus becomes the legal father of the child” (Brown, 1993, p.139) thus, Brown argues, there is no question that Jesus is genuinely Joseph’s son and therefore a descendent of David and Abraham. Grundy also makes this point stating that “the naming of the infant by Joseph amounts to formal acknowledgment of the infant as his legal son and clinches Jesus’ place in the Davidic line.” (Grundy, 1994, p.26)<sup>42</sup>. By contrast Geza Vermes argues strongly against Brown’s position vis-a-vis the validity of Joseph’s acceptance of Jesus as his son being enough to make him a descendant of David, Vermes describes this position as a “legal fiction” (Vermes, 2006, p.72) arguing that “the text of the Mishnah that is usually cited in support of it is of questionable relevance” (Vermes, 2006, p.73). If we accept Vermes against Brown and Grundy then we might conclude that Matthew takes a position at odds with other contemporary Jews. It remains unknown whether or not Matthew’s text is drawing on the established practise among Jewish communities or if he is being innovative. I will leave aside the question of whether Matthew’s position is following an established tradition of paternity or presenting an innovative practise. Whatever might be the case it seems clear from the text that the author of Matthew intends to have his cake and eat it, presenting a divine origin for Jesus while also presenting him as a legitimate son of Joseph and through Joseph’s lineage a son of David, Jesus’ Davidic descent is dependent on Joseph’s paternity. Matthew’s text has constructed a narrative that allows it to present both identities of Jesus. Jesus is both a new creation of God mirroring the creation of humanity, and at the same time a descendant of Abraham and David.

On the basis of the discussion above I posit that there is a link between Jesus’ origins and the creation. This link sets the scene for a wider presentation of Jesus as one who is a type for the people of Israel, it is a starting place. As such I do not perceive that the text seeks to draw a direct link to the theme of displacement, rather it gives a starting place. Both Israel and Jesus have their

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<sup>42</sup> This theme of adoption allows a further possible reading of the text based on the concept of Levirate marriage. The seemingly extinct line of Davidic kings is given a new heir through the generosity of God.

origins in God, evoking this starting point underlines that there exists a particular relationship between Israel/Jesus and God.

### iii. The Genesis Joseph narrative

There are multiple parallels between the Joseph Story of Gen 37,39-50 and Matthew's infancy narrative in Matt 1:18-2:23. In this section I will discuss some of these parallels and comment on what might be their significance. I will then attempt to draw some conclusions as to what Matthew's text is trying to communicate by making the allusions it does, I will focus particularly on how these allusions relate to the theme of displacement. At the conclusion of this section I will assess these allusions against Allison's guidelines.

Matt 1:20b: ἰδοὺ ἄγγελος κυρίου κατ' ὄναρ ἐφάνη αὐτῷ

Suddenly an Angel/Messenger of the Lord appeared in a dream (*my translation*)

An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream (*NRSV*)

Brown notes that the phrase κατ' ὄναρ (in a dream) is used five times in Matthew's infancy narrative (Brown, 1993, p.129), on four of these occasions Joseph is the recipient of the dream.<sup>43</sup> Bendoraitis notes that both appearances of angels and episodes of messages received in dreams are common OT themes (Bendoraitis, 2010, pp.38, 40), so before analysing the text in detail we can perceive, as was the case with his inclusion of a genealogy, that in this narrative Matthew's text wishes to generally associate Jesus' birth with features which are reminiscent of the OT. Similarly Davies & Allison highlight a wide culture of significant dreams in the OT mentioning the Joseph story from Genesis as well as Daniel and Job as examples (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.207). Grundy goes further arguing that "the famous dreams of the patriarch Joseph (Gen 37:5-11) influenced Matthew" (Grundy, 1994, p.22), Brown acknowledges the link to Genesis<sup>44</sup> but

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<sup>43</sup> The fifth is received by the Magi who collectively receive a message in a dream.

<sup>44</sup> While noting that the LXX uses a different greek word for dream.

disagrees with Davies & Allison's association of the text with Daniel noting that "Matthew's dreams are not like the apocalyptic dreams in Daniel" (Brown, 1993, p.129). The link to the Genesis Joseph is also highlighted by Green (1975, p.55), Hendrickx (1984, p.16) and Carter (2000, p.68). However curiously none of these commentators go further than briefly acknowledging the author of Matthew's intention to evoke the Joseph of Genesis. I am in agreement with those scholars who argue that Matthew's text is seeking to draw a specific link between Jesus and the Genesis Joseph story. I will assume the existence of a relationship between the texts and attempt to discuss why Matthew's text might seek to make this link. It is clear that even though many scholars note a connection their lack of commentary of why this connection exists denotes that they do not think it is significant enough to study. I will keep this academic disinterest in mind as I discuss this theme; however lack of discussion cannot be the basis for arguing a position. The Genesis Joseph narrative tells the story of how Joseph is firstly displaced to Egypt and then how the nation of Israel as a whole is displaced. In Matthew's text Jesus and his family follow this same path to Egypt. Matthew's narrative takes Jesus on the same journey as his ancestors. I propose that Matthew's text is seeking to present Jesus as a type for Israel, he re-follows in microcosm the larger history of his nation, he retraces the footsteps of some of his prominent ancestors. The displacement to Egypt is part of this re-telling.

Matthew's text presents his Joseph as a parallel to the Genesis Joseph. Both men are sons of Jacob (Matt 1:16 / Gen 30:22-24), at first sight we might conclude that this is too obscure a link to have significance, however it is of note that in Luke's genealogy Lk 3:23-38 Joseph's father is named as Heli (verse 23 NRSV), so it is reasonable to posit that the name of Joseph's father is a Matthean creation. There are further links between the two Josephs, both Josephs have dreams (Matt 1:20/ Gen 37:5-11), both men in different ways are forced to travel to Egypt (Matt 2:13-14 / Gen 37:25-28), both men have to navigate their way through complicated marital or extra-marital difficulties (Matt 1:24-25 / Gen 39:6-18). Beyond all these details perhaps the most significant

parallel is that both men are facilitators of a divine act of redemption; in Genesis Joseph's divinely inspired ability to interpret dreams combined with his own foresight and planning lead to Egypt avoiding the worst consequences of famine, and to the salvation of his brothers, the sons of Israel (Gen 41:53-57); in Matthew, Joseph also receives divine messages in dreams, this combined with his decisive action saves Jesus from slaughter by Herod (Matt 2:16-18), the two Josephs are cast as men of similar character. Unlike his Genesis predecessor Matthew's Joseph is not able to prevent wider death in his immediate context, however when considered with a wider perspective the saving of Jesus from death as a child meant he remained alive to bring about a greater salvation later in Matthew's text. What seems to unite the two Josephs most strongly is that their actions lead to salvation for Israel, in Genesis to the sons of Israel and by extension the nation of Israel, and in Matthew's text to Jesus who could be understood as a type for the nation of Israel. The Genesis Joseph's salvation is material in that he provides food; salvation from starvation is achieved for his brothers the sons of Israel and also for the Egyptians, both for Jews and Gentiles. The actions of Matthew's Joseph allow Jesus to live into adulthood and therefore continue his adult ministry to both Jews and Gentiles. The salvation of Jesus follows in a tradition of which the Genesis Joseph is a part.

I have argued that the linking of the two Joseph's is clear in Matthew's text, as is the linking of the two narratives on the shared theme of salvation.

I will now assess these allusions to Joseph in Matthew's text against Allison's guidelines (Allison, 1993, pp.21-23). As with all of the allusions in Matthew's text Allison's criteria 1 and 2 are not in question so can be passed over without further comment. Likewise criterion 4 which asks as to the prominence of the OT figure or passage to which Matthew's text is alluding, I will assume that the OT figure of Joseph is significant enough that Matthew's text might reasonably have chosen to make an allusion to him. Criterion 3 asks if the details we are given in Matthew's text are specific enough to be accurately identified as an Allusion to the OT Joseph. It is true that none

of the details noted above taken in isolation can be argued to have this direct link, dreams are clearly a theme which links the narratives but as already outlined above dreams as messages from God occur elsewhere in the OT. Likewise the detail of marital/extra-marital difficulties is in no way unique. That in both cases it is through Joseph that both Israel and Jesus travel to Egypt is a more solid basis for the link, there are other OT mentions of Egypt but it could be argued that these mentions are in themselves references to the time in Egypt before the Exodus. Criterion 5 asks whether this allusion occurs elsewhere in contemporary writings, on this point my suggested allusion again meets difficulty, the OT Joseph although mentioned in certain places<sup>45</sup> is not a significant character in the NT generally. Criterion 6 looks for unusual or specific details which point to the OT Joseph story, on this point we can note that both Josephs are sons of Jacob. Overall it must be concluded that the key narrative links is that of dreams, and that of a journey to Egypt, the stories do hold similar themes, so I am confident that Matthew's text, while not asserting it as a central theme, does wish to very gently allude to the OT Joseph narrative. However it cannot be argued neatly that the OT Joseph is being presented as a type for either Matthew's Joseph or Jesus. The connection to displacement however is a little clearer, the genesis Joseph is forcibly displaced to Egypt, Matthew's Joseph, Mary and Jesus are forced to flee to Egypt.

#### **iv. The Magi and Balaam**

Matthew's infancy narrative tells the story of the Magi who have travelled from the east (Matt 2:1). This episode begins with a story of travel, in this case voluntary and temporary displacement, it leads to the family being forced to flee (forced displacement); movement is a theme which runs through this episode. The story is also an encounter between Jesus and gentiles, the arrival of the Magi indicates that in the gospel Jesus will encounter those outside the Jewish people.

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<sup>45</sup> For example Acts 7:9



Encountering gentiles would have been an inevitable consequence of displacement for those, like the Matthean community, who fled the Jewish-Roman War, so the mention of gentiles is indirectly linked to the theme of displacement.

Matthew's story of the magi carries some parallels with contemporary events in Matthew's era. Many commentators highlight the journey west to Rome of the Armenian ruler Tiridates to pay homage to the Emperor Nero in 66<sup>CE</sup>, Tiridates is referred to in Suetonius, Pliny and Dio Cassius as a Magi (Brown, 1993, p. 174; Beare, 1981, p.74; Luz, 1989, p.131; Davies & Allison, 1988, 230; Powell, 2001, pp.139-140), therefore it is plausible to argue that Matthew's text is re-telling and adapting this episode as a political parody with the Magi visiting Jesus in the place of Tiridates visiting Nero, Matthew's text thereby makes a statement as to where real authority is held. Brown comments that the practise of foreign dignitaries coming to offer homage and gifts to a king was not uncommon in contemporary society, the actions of the magi acknowledge Jesus as a King (Brown, 1993, p.174), it is notable that the Magi do not offer similar homage and gifts to Herod. Another very plausible event that may have influenced Matthew's text is the appearance of Halley's comet in 12<sup>BCE</sup> (Brown, 1993, p.171), an event probably too early to actually mark the birth of Jesus but given that the author of Matthew is writing around one hundred years later an oral memory of a new star, which appeared to be moving, around that time could easily have found its way into the traditions associated with Jesus' birth. In this study I am discussing how Matthew uses the OT, however I think it important to note that these contemporary events very likely also influenced the composition of Matthew's text. These links between Matthew's text and other texts do not directly link to the theme of displacement, but they do speak to the theme of imperial power and kingship; it is possible the displacement experience of the Matthean community might have lead them to reflect deeply on the nature of power and the events of the war which caused their displacement. This suggestion is of course unprovable in concrete terms, but it seems likely that in the context of displacement the Matthean community might have felt consoled and

inspired by a belief in an alternative more just divine authority which is superior to Rome, and which will eventually prevail.

Beare notes that as this story is introduced we already know from Matthew chapter one that the child Jesus is the Christ, one who is son of David. We as readers know that the one 'born king of the Jews' (Matt 2:2) is Jesus the Messiah (Beare, 1981, p.76). Carter comments that the Magi offer proskynesis to Jesus but not to Herod (Carter, 2001, p.76). Beare comments that the way in which the story is introduced 'in the days of Herod the king' is potentially problematic as it refers to Herod as king, but he notes that this is a typical semitic form of expression reminiscent of Hos 1:1 and Amos 1:1 (Beare, 1981, p.76), we already know that Jesus rather than Herod is the true king. Davies and Allison comment that: "Our evangelist is interested in contrasting his rule and kingdom with the rule and kingdom of Jesus the Davidic Messiah" (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.227). Grundy makes a similar comment, noting that from the genealogy we already know that Jesus is son of David, the repeated mentioning of the land of Judah emphasises this typology (Grundy, 1994, p.26). Grundy finds a link between the Magi before Herod (Matt 2:7), and the Magi who stand before Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 2:2 LXX) an account which also features the interpretation of dreams (Grundy, 1994, pp.26-27).

Perhaps the most commented on OT reference which links to the story of the Magi is that of Balaam's star in Num 22-24, the similarities between the two stories centre on the star present in both stories (Num 24:17). Luz has reservations as to the relevance of this text to Matthew's star which I will comment on below. However in general commentators have identified this text as Matthew's primary OT parallel for the star, this is the view held by Brown (1993, pp.193-196), Davies & Allison (1988, p.231) and Grundy (1994, p.27). Brown writes: "the most likely background is offered by the plot of Balak, the transjordanian king of Moab" (Brown, 1993, p.193). Brown points out that Matthew's Herod resembles both Balak and Pharaoh (Brown, 1993, p.193). Brown, with Davies & Allison, also notes that Philo (writing early in the common era) describes Balaam as

a magos filled with an authentic prophetic spirit (Brown, 1993, p.193; Davies & Allison, 1988, p.231). It is also noteworthy that, like Matthew's Magi, in Numbers Balaam is described as coming from the east (Num 22:5) (Brown, 1993, p.168)<sup>46</sup>. It is of note to my purpose that Balaam has travelled, in a sense is displaced, as are the Hebrews in the desert of Sinai. The narrative relates that Balaam foils the hostile plans of Balak in a similar way to Matthew's Magi with Herod (Brown, 1993, pp.193-194). Brown writes: "the wicked king sought to use the foreign magus to destroy his enemy, but the magus actually honoured his enemy" (Brown, 1993, p.194) and similarly Davies & Allison write:

When the evil king Balak tried to enlist Balaam in the cause against Israel, the seer turned around and prophesied the nation's future greatness and the coming of a great ruler. This is rather close to Matt 2:1-12, where the cruel Herod, in his attempt to destroy the king of Israel, employs foreign magi who in the event bring only honour to the new-born deliverer. (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.231).

A further parallel is noted by Brown in the similarity between Num 24:25a "Then Balaam got up and went back to his place" (NRSV) and Matt 2:12b: "they left for their own country" (Brown, 1993, p.196) again another detail of displacement. For Brown it is evident that Matthew is drawing on the Balaam tradition when writing his story of the magi.

Luz's counter argument is that the Numbers text bears little resemblance to Matthew's story of the Magi other than the mention of a star. He agrees that there are Jewish examples of Balaam being described as a Magi but he argues that these are too late to be useful (Luz, 1989, p.131). following Brown's theory of a pre-matthean narrative having been embellished by the author of Matthew (Brown, 1993, pp.104-121 for Brown's main argument relating to pre-Matthean sources, pp.190-196 as he applies it to the Magi narrative), this might lead us to accept that there is a level of disconnect between elements of the story, Luz points out that "a Herod

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<sup>46</sup> Brown highlights this link between Balaam and the Magi, however it should be noted that the text does not actually state that Balaam came from the East. Numbers 22:2 describes Balaam as coming from a town on the banks of the Euphrates; a region which is in the East, but the word is not used.

narrative without the Magi would be incomplete" (Luz, 1989, p.130-1), how would the story of the massacre of children come about without the prior story? But this is not what Brown is arguing, Brown proposes that it is the Magi's visit which is the pre-existing story which is then expanded by the author of Matthew, it is possible to read the story of the Magi without reference to Herod. The earlier narrative tells the story of Magi who travel from the east guided by a star, offer homage to Jesus, then return home. According to Brown the Herod episode has been fit around the Magi narrative (Brown, 1993, p.192). If we follow Brown's position that it is the Herod story which has been added to the simpler Magi narrative then this enhances the possibility of displacement being a significant theme, the element of threat and subsequent displacement has been added to the narrative. If we follow this argument further then it is clear that identifying of the star as an allusion to Balaam only makes sense in relation to Herod, Balak's request that Balaam curse Israel loosely parallels Herod's request for information from the Magi, it seems to me that without the Herod link any connection between the Magi's star and Balaam's star is very tenuous because without Herod there is no parallel for Balak. As it is, however, the Herod narrative is present in Matthew's text so it is possible that the author of Matthew by adding the story of Herod's massacre and the fleeing of the family also makes relevant a connection to Balaam's star. It is possible that Matthew's text is very subtly evoking this episode which is set in the context of displacement, and which offers hope in the context of displacement; Balaam's messages evoke themes which are found elsewhere in Matthew's infancy narrative:

He has not beheld misfortune in Jacob;  
Nor has he seen trouble in Israel.  
The Lord their God is with them,  
Acclaimed as a king among them.  
(Num 23:21 NRSV)

The reference to 'God is with them' evokes a similar theme to Isa 7:14 at Matt 1:23.

Grundy suggests that Balaam's star was "interpreted messianically in late Judaism" (Grundy, 1994, p.27), he gives evidence of this with reference to the second Jewish War of 132-

135CE, when “son of a star” was used as a messianic title (Grundy, 1994, p.27). This detail noted by Grundy gives added weight to a link to Balaam being a conscious intention of the text; it is clear throughout the infancy narrative that Matthew’s text is presenting Jesus as Messiah so any OT allusion which points to this purpose is more likely to be credible.

Davies and Allison argue that in Matthew’s text the Magi are “Balaam’s successors” who come to witness the fulfilment of the OT oracle their predecessor uttered so long ago (Davies & Allison, 1988, p.231). Given the frequency of citations in Matthew’s text it is curious that he does not quote from the prophecies of Balaam in Numbers. However this study has shown that allusions without citations are common in Matthew’s text. My opinion is that the lack of a citation is not of great importance, Matthew’s text does seek to evoke Balaam but this allusion is not a central theme.

As with previously suggested allusions above it is necessary to assess their credibility against Allison’s guidelines (Allison, 1993, pp.21-23). The key stumbling block is that this link to Balaam is based for the most part on the detail of the star, it is questionable whether this slight detail is enough on which to build a strong link. Subtle parallels are, I believe, part of the Matthean tradition, however their subtlety leaves us unable to be clear as to whether the allusion is legitimate or not. Likewise Balaam is not a significant figure throughout Matthew’s gospel nor more widely in the NT, there is nothing obvious about the Magi being connected to Balaam. So while on the basis of my discussion above I believe that the allusion is a credible possibility I do not have enough evidence to argue conclusively on the basis of Allison’s guidelines.

Likewise in this study centred on the theme of displacement it must be acknowledged that this possible allusion to Balaam has only tentative and indirect relevance to my theme. As noted above both Balaam and the Magi travel but it is hard to argue that they are displaced, each returns home. While it is true that the Balaam narrative is set in the desert of the Exodus, and so displacement is a reality of the context, the connection is weak. It is also significant that both the

Balaam and the magi narratives speak to the role of gentiles in the kingdom of God, a theme which would have held relevance in a diaspora context. And the story of the Magi is closely linked to the story of the family being displaced to Egypt.

So I conclude that the theme of displacement is only tentatively relevant to the allusion to Balaam in Matthew's text but the reality of displacement is part of the wider context of both Matthew's text and Numbers. It remains possible but unclear whether Matthew's text makes this allusion for the purpose of evoking the theme of displacement.

v. **Summary and conclusions on the use of OT characters and allusions and the theme of displacement in Matthew's infancy narrative.**

In this chapter I have discussed a series of allusions which Matthew's text makes to characters and episodes. I have assessed the validity of these allusions and whether they relate to the theme of displacement.

The character of Moses is evoked by Matthew's text by means of narrative similarities, these narrative similarities relate to stories of displacement, both Moses and Jesus are forced to flee from threats as babies and later are called back by God. The creation is evoked by reference to the action of πνεύματος ἁγίου at Jesus' conception and birth, Jesus is presented as a new creation, this new creation theme does not necessarily link directly to the theme of displacement but it sets the scene of God's intervention to save his people. The Genesis Joseph is presented by Matthew's text as a model for the Matthean Joseph, both characters experience persecution and displacement, both play a key role in the salvation of Israel and Jesus respectively. Through various narrative details most prominently dreams the two characters are linked. Matthew's Magi are travellers so to an extent displaced but as travellers by choice this link is weak. the Magi narrative links to the OT story of Balaam, Balaam blesses Israel in the desert of the exodus, similarly the magi bow before Jesus. I have discussed the link between the story of Balaam and the Magi, my

conclusions if that it is valid to draw Matthean themes from the connection, however it only relates to displacement in an indirect way.

Through each of these four allusions to OT narratives I have discussed displacement as a theme, the importance of this theme differs in each case. Overall I have presented an argument that Matthew's text does use characters and allusions to present displacement as significant, but this is not the sole theme, the faithfulness of God, the inclusion of gentiles and the presentation of OT characters as models for Matthean characters are also key themes.

## **CHAPTER 5**

## **CONCLUSIONS**



In this study my task has been to assess the extent to which the theme of displacement is significant to the use of the OT in Matthew's infancy narrative. My questions have been:

1. To what extent is displacement a significant theme in Matthew's infancy narrative.
2. Where the theme of displacement can be established, how is the OT used within the text to present and expound on the theme?

In chapter one I introduced my theme and discussed the reasons why displacement might have been a significant theme for Matthew's community, my discussion focussed on both the political, social and religious reasons why displacement might have been a significant theme. Politically it is my tentative suggestion that the Matthean community was made up at least in part of people who had experienced displacement within living memory during the Jewish-Roman war, this community was resident in a diaspora city, perhaps having been there for many years, integrated to an extent but also maintaining a distinct culture. Furthermore after the Jewish-Roman war the Roman authorities imposed a heavy tax burden on Jewish people throughout the empire making life harder for Jews than for other groups. In this context displacement might have been a significant factor for the community reflecting on their lives. I also discussed that Matthew's community were just one group in the wider context of formative Judaism in the period 70-100CE. It is clear that there existed a certain amount of (at least) tension if not conflict between the Matthean community and other Jewish groups, this feeling of distance from other Jewish groups might also have contributed to a sense of displacement. While I noted that such factors make a focus on the theme of displacement plausible, even at times likely, they do not offer proof that it actually was significant, such evidence must come principally from the text itself.

The task of chapter two was to discuss how Matthew's infancy narrative makes use of the OT, and to lay out some guidelines by which these uses of the OT can be assessed. I began by identifying three ways in which Matthew's text references the OT: 1) by using citations from the OT, 2) by associating Jesus with significant named figures or events from Jewish history, and 3) by

making allusions to significant narratives or unnamed figures in Jewish history. I outlined a methodology for understanding OT references in Matthew's text, choosing to follow the method of Dodd and Beale who argue that Matthew's OT references often refer to a wider section of the OT than that cited (Dodd, 1952, p.61; Beale, 2012, pp.710-711). I have in general tried to begin with those references which are most certain, the actual citations, and then move on to discuss other less certain references such as named characters or allusions. When assessing allusions I have made use of Allison's guidelines as my criteria for assessing the validity of each allusion (Allison, 1993, pp.21-23).

In general I have followed those scholars who argue that OT references are there to point the reader towards larger themes, and in the case of the formula citations towards the larger texts from which these citations are taken. I have argued that in order to interpret the Matthean use of a particular reference it is often necessary to take into account the wider OT context. Scholars are divided on this point, I have discussed the opposing view that Matthew's text sometimes uses the OT in contradiction to its OT meaning. While acknowledging that both positions hold weight, and differing weight in relation to different OT references, I have generally agreed with those scholars who believe that Matthew's text is aware and takes seriously the OT context.

Through chapters three and four I undertook to study the text itself; chapter three focussing on the genealogy, chapter four on the narrative text.

In chapter three I discussed the genealogy (Matt 1:1-17), discussing allusions to the creation, the Babylonian exile, David and Abraham, and the inclusion of five women. In my discussion I have argued that displacement is a significant theme in the genealogy. The Babylonian exile is the only event mentioned in the genealogy and acts as a key marker in the text, I argued that this detail is an indication that exile and displacement are a significant theme. David and Abraham are both figures who experience displacement and who begin as marginal characters but are brought to prominence by God, their inclusion relates to the theme of displacement, although

it must be acknowledged that their inclusion holds much wider significance relating to the promises made by God to Israel. Of the women included Tamar, Rahab and Ruth are all foreign women brought into the nation of Israel, the story of each involves displacement; again while it is credible to acknowledge displacement as a reason for their inclusion it is important to note that other themes are part of the reason for their inclusion such as the relationship between Jews and gentiles. Less pertinent to my theme was the allusion to creation, this theme sets the scene for a belief in a God who will remain faithful to Israel but is only very indirectly an allusion to displacement.

In chapter four I discussed the narrative section (1:18-2:23). In part a) I began by discussing the formula citations, Isa 7:14, Jer 31:15, Hos 11:1, Mic 5:2 & 2 Sam 5:2, and the citation at Matt 2:23. I argued that in most cases these citations relate to a displacement episode or to the threat of displacement. Isa 7:14 to the threatened exile during the Assyrian crisis, Jer 31:15 to the Babylonian exile, Hos 11:1 both backwards to the Exodus and forwards to exile as a consequence of disobedience, and Mic 5:2 and 2 Sam 5:2 to the story of David and in the case of Micah to the Assyrian crisis. As previously in each case displacement is not the only theme at play, God's faithfulness is significant but this faithfulness is displayed in a context of displacement.

In chapter four part b) I discussed how Matthew's text uses allusions to characters and stories not explicitly mentioned; I commented on how the text evokes the character of Moses, the stories of creation, the Genesis Joseph, and Balaam. In each case I used Allison's methodology to assess the validity of these allusions. As above the story of creation relates only passingly to my theme. Similarly the Balaam allusions only link indirectly to my theme. However in the case of Moses and Joseph displacement is a more significant part of their story, so it is possible to suggest (albeit tentatively) that the theme is at least part of why these characters are evoked.

In conclusion I have discussed the theme of displacement across different aspects of Matthew's infancy narrative. On the basis of this study I consider that in places displacement is a

theme which the author is consciously seeking to evoke; and furthermore, due to circumstances of contemporary experience and the longer experience of the Jewish nation, that the theme of displacement is embedded into Matthean experience to an extent that it is discernible even if it is not a consciously intended theme. Matthew's text supports the argument that as a displaced people the Matthean community sought to understand their situation by reflecting upon the past displacements of Jewish history.

It is important to also note that displacement is not the only theme of significance; the text also speaks of Jesus' kingship and of relations to gentiles. The theme of God's faithfulness to Israel is key to the text, particularly in relation to God's promises to Abraham and David, however it is significant to note that this faithfulness at times displays itself in the context of displacement.

Matthew's text presents us with the story of Jesus' origins. Beginning with a genealogy which includes mention of displacement to Babylon, a series of ancestors who were displaced and references to OT texts which speak to the theme of displacement; the text continues with a narrative which tells us the story of Jesus' own displacement to Egypt and return. Matthew's infant Jesus follows a path which re-enacts the stories and characters of the OT, we are presented with a Jesus imbued with the story of the Jewish people. The experience of displacement is at the heart of this story.

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